

THE  
WORKS  
OF THE  
ENGLISH POETS.  
WITH  
P R E F A C E  
BIOGRAPHICAL AND CRITICAL  
BY SAMUEL JOHNSON.

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VOLUME THE FOURTH.

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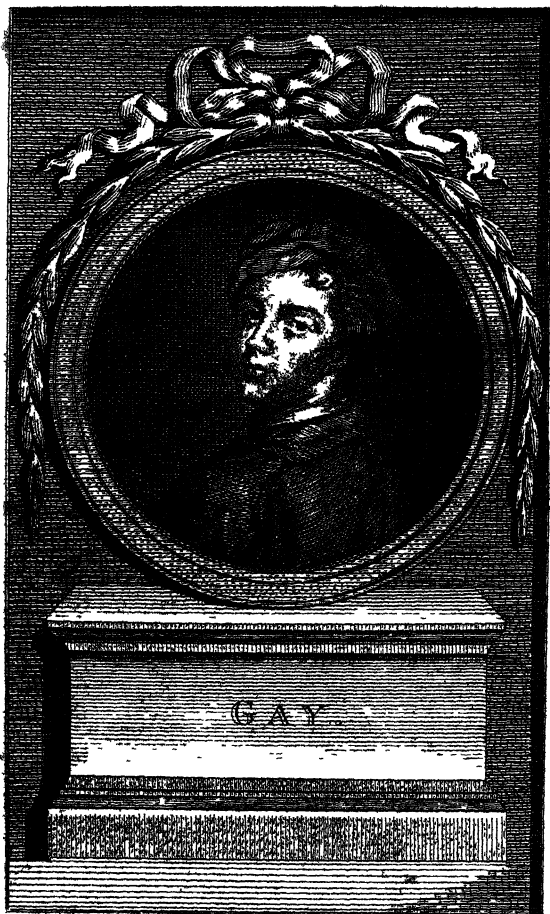


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W. H. Smith



## G A Y.

JOHN GAY, descended from an old family that had been long in possession of the manor of \* Goldworthy in Devonshire, was born in 1688, at or near Barnstaple, where he was educated by Mr. Luck, who was then the school of that town with good reputation, and, a little before he retired from it, published a volume of Latin and English verses. Under such a master he was likely to form a taste for poetry. Being born without prospect of hereditary riches, he was sent to London, at an early age, and placed apprentice with a scrivener.

How long he continued behind the counter, with what degree of formality and dexterity,

\* Goldworthy does not appear in the *Pittary*. Dr. J.

he received and accommodated the Ladies, as he probably took no delight in telling it, is not known. The report is, that he was soon weary of either the restraint or servility of his occupation, and easily persuaded his master to discharge him.

The dutchess of Monmouth, remarkable for inflexible perseverance in her demand to be treated as a princess, in 1712 took Gay into her service as secretary: by quitting a shop for such service, he might gain leisure, but he certainly advanced little in the boast of independence. Of his leisure he made so good use, that he published next year a poem on *Rural Sports*, and inscribed it to Mr. Pope, who was then rising fast into reputation. Pope was pleased with the honour; and when he became acquainted with Gay, found such attractions in his manners and conversation, that he seems to have received him into his inmost confidence; and a friendship was formed between them which lasted to their separation by death, without any known abatement on either part. Gay was the general favourite of the whole association of wits; but they regarded him as a play-fellow rather than  
a partner,

a partner, and treated him with more fondness than respect.

Next year he published *The Shepherd's Week*, six English pastorals, in which the images are drawn from real life, such as it appears among the rusticks in parts of England remote from London. Steele, in some papers of the *Guardian*, had praised Ambrose Philips, as the Pastoral writer that yielded only to Theocritus, Virgil, and Spenser. Pope, who had also published Pastorals, not pleased to be overlooked, drew up a comparison of his own compositions with those of Philips, in which he covertly gave himself the preference, while he seemed to disown it. Not content with this, he is supposed to have incited Gay to write the *Shepherd's Week*, to shew, that if it be necessary to copy nature with minuteness, rural life must be exhibited such as grossness and ignorance have made it. So far the plan was reasonable, but the Pastorals are introduced by a *Proeme*, written with such imitation as they could attain of obsolete language, and by consequence in a style that was never spoken nor written in any language or in any place.

But the effect of reality and truth became conspicuous, even when the intention was to shew them groveling and degraded. These Pastorals became popular, and were read with delight, as just representations of rural manners and occupations, by those who had no interest in the rivalry of the poets, nor knowledge of the critical dispute.

In 1713 he brought a comedy called *The Wife of Bath* upon the stage, but it received no applause: he printed it, however; and seven-teen years after, having altered it, and, as he thought, adapted it more to the public taste, he offered it again to the town, but, though he was flushed with the success of the *Beggar's Opera*, had the mortification to see it again rejected.

In the last year of queen Anne's life, Gay was made secretary to the earl of Clarendon, ambassador to the court of Hanover. This was a station that naturally gave him hopes of kindness from every party; but the Queen's death put an end to her favours, and he had dedicated his *Shepherd's Week* to Bolingbroke, which Swift considered as the crime that ob-  
structed

fructed all kindness from the house of Hannover.

He did not, however, omit to improve the right which his office had given him to the notice of the royal family. On the arrival of the princess of Wales, he wrote a poem, and obtained so much favour, that both the Prince and Princess went to see his *What d'ye call it*, a kind of mock-tragedy, in which the images were comic, and the action grave; so that, as Pope relates, Mr. Cromwell, who could not hear what was said, was at a loss how to reconcile the laughter of the audience with the solemnity of the scene.

Of this performance the value certainly is but little, but it was one of the lucky trifles that give pleasure by novelty, and was so much favoured by the audience, that envy appeared against it in the form of criticism; and Griffin, a player, in conjunction with Mr. Theobald, a man afterwards more remarkable, produced a pamphlet called *The Key to the What d' ye call it*; which, says Gay, "calls me a blockhead, and " Mr. Pope a knave."

But Fortune has always been inconstant. Not long afterwards (1717) he endeavoured to

entertain the town with *Three Hours after Marriage*; a comedy written, as there is sufficient reason for believing by the joint assistance of Pope and Arbuthnot. One purpose of it was to bring into contempt Dr. Woodward the Fossilist, a man not really or justly contemptible. It had the fate which such outrages deserve: the scene in which Woodward was directly and apparently ridiculed, by the introduction of a mummy and a crocodile, disgusted the audience, and the performance was driven off the stage with general condemnation.

Gay is represented as a man easily incited to hope, and deeply depressed when his hopes were disappointed. This is not the character of a hero; but it may naturally imply something more generally welcome, a soft and civil companion. Whoever is apt to hope good from others is diligent to please them; but he that believes his powers strong enough to force their own way, commonly tries only to please himself.

He had been simple enough to imagine that those who laughed at the *What d' ye call it* would raise the fortune of its author; and, finding nothing done, sunk into dejection.

His

His friends endeavoured to divert him. The earl of Burlington sent him (1716) into Devonshire, the year after, Mr. Pulteney took him to Aix, and in the following year lord Harcourt invited him to his seat, where, during his visit, two rural lovers were killed with lightning, as is particularly told in Pope's Letters.

Being now generally known, he published (1720) his Poems by subscription with such success, that he raised a thousand pounds, and called his friends to a consultation, what use might be best made of it. Lewis, the steward of lord Oxford, advised him to intrust it to the funds, and live upon the interest, Arbuthnot bade him intrust it to Providence, and live upon the principal; Pope directed him, and was seconded by Swift, to purchase an annuity.

Gay in that disastrous year \* had a present from young Craggs of some South-sea-stock, and once supposed himself to be master of twenty thousand pounds. His friends persuaded him to sell his share; but he dreamed of dignity and splendour, and could not bear

\* Spence.

to obstruct his own fortune. He was then importuned to sell as much as would purchase an hundred a year for life, “which,” says Fenton, “will make you sure of a clean shirt and “a shoulder of mutton every day.” This counsel was rejected: the profit and principal were lost, and Gay sunk under the calamity so low that his life became in danger. .

By the care of his friends, among whom Pope appears to have shewn particular tenderness, his health was restored; and, returning to his studies, he wrote a tragedy called *The Captives*, which he was invited to read before the princess of Wales. When the hour came, he saw the princess and her ladies all in expectation, and advancing with reverence, too great for any other attention, stumbled at a stool, and falling forwards, threw down a weighty Japan screen. The princess started, the ladies screamed, and poor Gay, after all the disturbance, was still to read his play.

The fate of *The Captives*, which was acted at Drury-Lane in 1723-4, I know not\*; but he

\* It was acted seven nights. The Author's third night was by command of their Royal Highnesses. E.



now thought himself in favour, and undertook (1726) to write a volume of Fables for the improvement of the young duke of Cumberland. For this he is said to have been promised a reward, which he had doubtless magnified with all the wild expectations of indigence and vanity.

Next year the Prince and Princess became King and Queen, and Gay was to be great and happy; but on the settlement of the household he found himself appointed gentleman usher to the princess Louisa. By this offer he thought himself insulted, and sent a message to the Queen, that he was too old for the place. There seem to have been many machinations employed afterwards in his favour; and diligent court was paid to Mrs. Howard, afterwards countess of Suffolk, who was much beloved by the King and Queen, to engage her interest for his promotion; but solicitations, verses, and flatteries, were thrown away; the lady heard them, and did nothing.

All the pain which he suffered from neglect, or, as he perhaps termed it, the ingratitude of the court, may be supposed to have been driven away by the unexampled success of the *Beggar's*.

*Opera.*

*Opera.* This play, written in ridicule of the musical Italian Drama, was first offered to Cibber and his brethren at Drury-Lane, and rejected, it being then carried to Rich, had the effect, as was ludicrously said, of *making* Gay *rich*, and Rich *gay*.

Of this lucky piece, as the reader cannot but wish to know the original and progress, I have inserted the relation which Spence has given in Pope's words.

“ Dr. Swift had been observing once to Mr.  
 “ Gay, what an odd pretty sort of a thing a  
 “ Newgate Pastoral might make. Gay was inclined to try at such a thing for some time ;  
 “ but afterwards thought it would be better to  
 “ write a comedy on the same plan. This was  
 “ what gave rise to the *Beggar's Opera* He  
 “ began on it ; and when first he mentioned it  
 “ to Swift, the Doctor did not much like the  
 “ project. As he carried it on, he shewed  
 “ what he wrote to both of us, and we now  
 “ and then gave a correction, or a word or two  
 “ of advice ; but it was wholly of his own  
 “ writing.—When it was done, neither of us  
 “ thought it would succeed.—We shewed it to  
 “ Congreve ; who, after reading it over, said,  
 “ It

“It would either take greatly, or be damned  
 “confoundedly. — We were all, at the first  
 “night of it, in great uncertainty of the event;  
 “till we were very much encouraged by over-  
 “hearing the duke of Argyle, who sat in the  
 “next box to us, say, ‘It will do—it must  
 “do! I see it in the eyes of them.’ This was  
 “a good while before the first act was over,  
 “and so gave us ease soon, for that duke (be-  
 “sides his own good taste) has a particular  
 “knack, as any one now living, in discovering  
 “the taste of the publick. He was quite right  
 “in this, as usual, the good-nature of the  
 “audience appeared stronger and stronger every  
 “act, and ended in a clamour of applause.”

Its reception is thus recorded in the notes to  
 the *Dunciad*.

“This piece was received with greater ap-  
 “plause than was ever known. Besides being  
 “acted in London sixty-three days without in-  
 “terruption, and renewed the next season with  
 “equal applause, it spread into all the great  
 “towns of England, was played in many places  
 “to the thirtieth and fortieth time, at Bath and  
 “Bristol fifty, &c. It made its progress into  
 “Wales, Scotland, and Ireland, where it was  
 “per-

“ performed twenty-four days successively.  
“ The ladies carried about with them the fa-  
“ vourite songs of it in fans, and houses were  
“ furnished with it in screens. The fame of  
“ it was not confined to the author only. The  
“ person who acted Polly, till then obscure,  
“ became all at once the favourite of the town,  
“ her pictures were engraved, and sold in great  
“ numbers, her Life written, books of letters  
“ and verses to her published, and pamphlets  
“ made even of her sayings and jests. Further-  
“ more, it drove out of England (for that sea-  
“ son) the Italian Opera, which had carried  
“ all before it for ten years.”

Of this performance, when it was printed, the reception was different, according to the different opinion of its readers. Swift commended it for the excellence of its morality, as a piece that “ placed all kinds of vice in the  
“ strongest and most odious light,” but others, and among them Dr. Herring, afterwards archbishop of Canterbury, censured it as giving encouragement not only to vice but to crimes, by making a highwayman the hero, and dismissing him at last unpunished. It has been even said, that, after the exhibition of the *Beggar's*

*gar's Opera*, the gangs of robbers were evidently multiplied.

Both these decisions are surely exaggerated. The play, like many others, was plainly written only to divert, without any moral purpose, and is therefore not likely to do good, nor can it be conceived, without more speculation than life requires or admits, to be productive of much evil. Highwaymen and house-breakers seldom frequent the play-house, or mingle in any elegant diversion; nor is it possible for any one to imagine that he may rob with safety, because he sees Macheath reprieved upon the stage.

This objection however, or some other rather political than moral, obtained such prevalence, that when Gay produced a second part under the name of *Polly*, it was prohibited by the Lord Chamberlain; and he was forced to recompense his repulse by a subscription, which is said to have been so liberally bestowed, that what he called oppression ended in profit. The \* publication was so much favoured, that though the first part gained him four hundred

\* Spence.

pounds, near thrice as much was profit of the second.

. He received yet another recompense for this supposed hardship, in the affectionate attention of the duke and dutchess of Queensberry, into whose house he was taken, and with whom he passed the remaining part of his life. \* The duke, considering his want of œconomy, undertook the management of his money, and gave it to him as he wanted it. But it is supposed that the discountenance of the Court sunk deep into his heart, and gave him more discontent than the applauses or tenderness of his friends could overpower. He soon fell into his old distemper, an habitual colick, and languished, though with many intervals of ease and cheerfulness, till a violent fit at last seized him, and carried him to the grave, as Arbuthnot reported, with more precipitance than he had ever known. He died on the fourth of December 1732, and was buried in Westminster Abbey. The letter which brought an account of his death to Swift was laid by for some days unopened, because when he received it

\* Spence.

he was impreſt with the preconception of ſome miſfortune.

After his death, was publiſhed a ſecond volume of Fables more political than the former. His opera of *Achilles* was acted, and the profits were given to two widow ſiſters, who inherited what he left, as his lawful heirs; for he died without a will, though he had gathered \* three thouſand pounds. There have appeared like-  
wiſe under his name a comedy called the *Diſtreſt Wife*, and the *Rehearſal at Gotham*, a piece of humour.

The character given him by Pope \* is this, that “ he was a natural man, without deſign, “ who ſpoke what he thought, and juſt as he “ thought it,” and that “ he was of a timid “ temper, and fearful of giving offence to the “ great,” which caution however, ſays Pope, was of no avail.

As a poet, he cannot be rated very high. He was, as I once heard a female critick remark, “ of a lower order.” He had not in any great degree the *mens diviniar*, the dignity of genius. Much however muſt be allowed to

Spence.

the

the author of a new species of composition, though it be not of the highest kind. We owe to Gay the Ballad Opera, a mode of comedy which at first was supposed to delight only by its novelty, but has now by the experience of half a century been found so well accommodated to the disposition of a popular audience, that it is likely to keep long possession of the stage. Whether this new drama was the product of judgement or of luck, the praise of it must be given to the inventor; and there are many writers read with more reverence, to whom such merit of originality cannot be attributed.

His first performance, the *Rural Sports*, is such as was easily planned and executed; it is never contemptible, nor ever excellent. The *Fan* is one of those mythological fictions which antiquity delivers ready to the hand, but which, like other things that lie open to every one's use, are of little value. The attention naturally retires from a new tale of Venus, Diana, and Minerva.

His Fables seem to have been a favourite work; for having published one volume, he left another behind him. Of this kind of Fables,



bles, the authors do not appear to have formed any distinct or settled notion. Phædrus evidently confounds them with *Tales*, and Gay both with *Tales* and *Allegorical Prosopopæias*. A *Fable*, or *Apologue*, such as is now under consideration seems to be, in its genuine state, a narrative in which beings irrational, and sometimes inanimate, *arbores loquuntur, non tantum feræ*, are, for the purpose of moral instruction, feigned to act and speak with human interests and passions. To this description the compositions of Gay do not always conform. For a Fable he gives now and then a Tale, or an abstracted Allegory; and from some, by whatever name they may be called, it will be difficult to extract any moral principle. They are, however, told with liveliness, the versification is smooth; and the diction, though now-and-then a little constrained by the measure or the rhyme, is generally happy.

To *Trivia* may be allowed all that it claims; it is spritely, various, and pleasant. The subject is of that kind which Gay was by nature qualified to adorn; yet some of his decorations may be justly wished away, An honest blacksmith might have done for Patty what is per-

formed by Vulcan. The appearance of Cloacina is nauseous and superfluous, a shoeboy could have been produced by the casual cohabitation of mere mortals. Horace's rule is broken in both cases, there is no *dignus vindice nodus*, no difficulty that required any supernatural interposition. A patten may be made by the hammer of a mortal, and a bastard may be dropped by a human strumpet. On great occasions, and on small, the mind is repelled by useless and apparent falsehood.

Of his little Poems the public judgement seems to be right; they are neither much esteemed, nor totally despised. The story of the Apparition is borrowed from one of the tales of Poggio. Those that please least are the pieces to which *Gulliver* gave occasion; for who can much delight in the echo of an unnatural fiction?

*Dione* is a counterpart to *Amynta*, and *Pastor-Fido*, and other trifles of the same kind, easily imitated, and unworthy of imitation. What the Italians call comedies from a happy conclusion, Gay calls a tragedy from a mournful event, but the style of the Italians and of Gay is equally tragical. There is something in the  
poetical

poetical *Arcadia* so remote from known reality and speculative possibility, that we can never support its representation through a long work. A Pastoral of an hundred lines may be endured; but who will hear of sheep and goats, and myrtle bowers and purling rivulets, through five acts? Such scenes please Barbarians in the dawn of literature, and children in the dawn of life; but will be for the most part thrown away, as men grow wise, and nations grow learned.

---

G R A N V I L L E.

OF GEORGE GRANVILLE,  
or as others write *Greenville*, or *Grenville*,  
afterwards lord Landfdown of Biddeford in the  
county of Devon, less is known than his name  
and rank might give reason to expect. He was  
born about 1667, the son of Bernard Green-  
ville, who was entrusted by Monk with the  
most private transactions of the Restoration;  
and the grandson of Sir Bevil Greenville, who  
died in the King's cause, at the battle of Landf-  
downe.

His early education was superintended by  
Sir William Ellis; and his progress was such  
that before the age of twelve he was sent to  
Cam-

Cambridge\*, where he pronounced a copy of his own verses to the princess Mary d'Este of Modena, then dutchess of York, when she visited the university.

At the accession of king James, being now at eighteen, he again exerted his poetical powers, and addressed the new monarch in three short pieces, of which the first is profane, and the two others such as a boy might be expected to produce; but he was commended by old Waller, who perhaps was pleased to find himself imitated, in six lines, which, though they begin with nonsense and end with dulness, excited in the young author a rapture of acknowledgement,

In numbers such as Waller's self might use.

It was probably about this time that he wrote the poem to the earl of Peterborough, upon his *accomplishment* of the duke of York's marriage with the princess of Modena, whose charms appear to have gained a strong preva-

\* To Trinity College. By the university register, it appears, that he was admitted to his Master's Degree in 1679: we must, therefore, set the year of his birth some years back.

lence over his imagination, and upon whom nothing ever has been charged but imprudent piety, an intemperate and misguided zeal for the propagation of popery.

However faithful Granville might have been to the King, or however enamoured of the Queen, he has left no reason for supposing that he approved either the artifices or the violence with which the King's religion was insinuated or obtruded. He endeavoured to be true at once to the King and to the Church.

Of this regulated loyalty he has transmitted to posterity a sufficient proof, in the letter which he wrote to his father about a month before the prince of Orange landed.

“ Mar, near Doncaster, Oct. 6, 1688.

“ To the honourable Mr. Barnard Granville,  
“ at the earl of Bathe's, St. James's.

“ SIR,

“ Your having no prospect of obtaining a  
“ commission for me, can no way alter or cool  
“ my desire at this important juncture to ven-  
“ ture my life, in some manner or other, for  
“ my King and my Country.

“ I can-

“ I cannot bear living under the reproach of  
 “ lying obscure and idle in a country retirement,  
 “ when every man who has the least sense of  
 “ honour should be preparing for the field.

“ You may remember, Sir, with what re-  
 “ luctance I submitted to your commands up-  
 “ on Monmouth’s rebellion, when no impor-  
 “ tunity could prevail with you to permit me  
 “ to leave the Academy: I was too young to  
 “ be hazarded, but, give me leave to say, it is  
 “ glorious at any age to die for one’s country,  
 “ and the sooner the nobler the sacrifice.

“ I am now older by three years. My uncle  
 “ Bathe was not so old when he was left among  
 “ the slain at the battle of Newbury; nor you  
 “ yourself, Sir, when you made your escape from  
 “ your tutor’s, to join your brother at the de-  
 “ fence of Scilly.

“ The same cause is now come round about  
 “ again. The king has been misled; let those  
 “ who have misled him be answerable for it.  
 “ Nobody can deny but he is sacred in his own  
 “ person; and it is every honest man’s duty to  
 “ defend it.

“ You are pleased to say, it is yet doubtful  
 “ if the Hollanders are rash enough to make  
 “ such an attempt; but, be that as it will, I

“ beg leave to insist upon it, that I may be  
“ presented to his majesty, as one whose ut-  
“ most ambition it is to devote his life to his  
“ service, and my country’s, after the example  
“ of all my ancestors.

“ The gentry assembled at York, to agree  
“ upon the choice of representatives for the  
“ county, have prepared an address, to assure  
“ his majesty they are ready to sacrifice their  
“ lives and fortunes for him upon this and all  
“ other occasions, but at the same time they  
“ humbly beseech him to give them such ma-  
“ gistrates as may be agreeable to the laws of  
“ the land; for, at present, there is no autho-  
“ rity to which they can legally submit.

“ They have been beating up for volunteers  
“ at York, and the towns adjacent, to supply  
“ the regiments at Hull, but nobody will list.

“ By what I can hear, every body wishes  
“ well to the King; but they would be glad his  
“ ministers were hanged.

“ The winds continue so contrary, that no  
“ landing can be so soon as was apprehended;  
“ therefore I may hope, with your leave and  
“ assistance, to be in readiness before any ac-  
“ tion can begin. I beseech you, Sir, most  
“ hum-



“humbly and most earnestly, to add this one  
 “act of indulgence more to so many other tes-  
 “timonies which I have constantly received of  
 “your goodness, and be pleased to believe me  
 “always with the utmost duty and submission,  
 “Sir,

“Your most dutiful son,  
 “and most obedient servant,  
 “GEO. GRANVILLE.”

Through the whole reign of king William he is supposed to have lived in literary retirement, and indeed had for some time few other pleasures but those of study in his power. He was, as the biographers observe, the younger son of a younger brother, a denomination by which our ancestors proverbially expressed the lowest state of penury and dependance. He is said, however, to have preserved himself at this time from disgrace and difficulties by œconomy, which he forgot or neglected in life more advanced, and in better fortune.

About this time he became enamoured of the countess of Newburgh, whom he has celebrated with so much ardour by the name of Mira. He wrote verses to her before he was  
 three

three and twenty, and may be forgiven if he regarded the face more than the mind. Poets are sometimes in too much haste to praise.

In the time of his retirement it is probable that he composed his dramattick pieces, the *She-Gallants* (acted 1696), which he revised, and called *Once a Lover, and always a Lover*; *The Jew of Venice*, altered from Shakespear's *Merchant of Venice* (1698); *Heroick Love*, a tragedy (1701); *The British Enchanters* (1706), a dramattick poem, and *Peleus and Thetis*, a masque, written to accompany *The Jew of Venice*.

The comedies, which he has not printed in his own edition of his works, I never saw; *Once a Lover, and always a Lover*, is said to be in a great degree indecent and gross. Granville could not admire without bigotry; he copied the wrong as well as the right from his masters, and may be supposed to have learned obscenity from Wycherley, as he learned mythology from Waller.

In his *Jew of Venice*, as Rowe remarks, the character of *Shylock* is made comick, and we are prompted to laughter instead of detestation.

It is evident that *Heroick Love* was written, and presented on the stage, before the death of Dryden. It is a mythological tragedy, upon the love of Agamemnon and Chryseis, and therefore easily sunk into neglect, though praised in verse by Dryden, and in prose by Pope.

It is concluded by the wife Ulysses with this speech:

Fate holds the strings, and men like children move  
But as they're led; success is from above.

At the accession of queen Anne, having his fortune improved by bequests from his father, and his uncle the earl of Bathe, he was chosen into parliament for Fowey. He soon after engaged in a joint translation of the *Invectives against Philip*, with a design, surely weak and puerile, of turning the thunder of Demosthenes upon the head of Lewis.

He afterwards (in 1706) had his estate again augmented by an inheritance from his elder brother, Sir Bevil Granville, who, as he returned from the government of Barbados, died at sea. He continued to serve in parliament;  
and

and in the ninth year of queen Anne was chosen knight of the shire for Cornwall.

At the memorable change of the ministry (1710), he was made secretary at war, in the place of Mr. Robert Walpole.

Next year, when the violence of party made twelve peers in a day, Mr. Granville became *Lord Lansdown Baron Biddesford*, by a promotion justly remarked to be not invidious, because he was the heir of a family in which two peerages, that of the earl of Bath and lord Granville of Potheridge, had lately become extinct. Being now high in the Queen's favour, he (1712) was appointed comptroller of the household, and a privy counsellor, and to his other honours were added the dedication of Pope's *Windjor Forest*. He was advanced next year to be treasurer of the household.

Of these favours he soon lost all but his title; for at the accession of king George his place was given to the earl Cholmondeley, and he was persecuted with the rest of his party. Having protested against the bill for attainting Ormond and Bolingbroke, he was, after the insurrection in Scotland, seized Sept. 26, 1715, as a suspected man, and confined in  
the

the Tower till Feb. 8, 1717, when he was at last released, and restored to his seat in parliament, where (1719) he made a very ardent and animated speech against the repeal of the bill to prevent Occasional Conformity, which, however, though it was then printed, he has not inserted into his works.

Some time afterwards (about 1722), being perhaps embarrassed by his profusion, he went into foreign countries, with the usual pretence of recovering his health. In this state of leisure and retirement, he received the first volume of Burnet's History, of which he cannot be supposed to have approved the general tendency, and where he thought himself able to detect some particular falsehoods. He therefore undertook the vindication of general Monk from some calumnies of Dr. Burnet, and some misrepresentations of Mr. Echard. This was answered civilly by Mr. Thomas Burnet and Oldmixon; and more roughly by Dr. Colbatch.

His other historical performance is a defence of his relation Sir Richard Greenville, whom lord Clarendon has shewn in a form very unamiable. So much is urged in this apology,  
to

to justify many actions that have been represented as culpable, and to palliate the rest, that the reader is reconciled for the greater part; and it is made very probable that Clarendon was by personal enmity disposed to think the worst of Greenville, as Greenville was also very willing to think the worst of Clarendon. These pieces were published at his return to England.

Being now desirous to conclude his labours, and enjoy his reputation, he published (1732) a very beautiful and splendid edition of his works, in which he omitted what he disapproved, and enlarged what seemed deficient.

He now went to Court, and was kindly received by queen Caroline; to whom and to the princess Anne he presented his works, with verses on the blank leaves, with which he concluded his poetical labours.

He died in Hanover-square, Jan. 30, 1735, having a few days before buried his wife, the lady Anne Villers, widow to Mr. Thynne, by whom he had four daughters, but no son.

Writers commonly derive their reputation from their works; but there are works which owe their reputation to the character of the writer.

writer. The publick sometimes has its favourites, whom it rewards for one species of excellence with the honours due to another. From him whom we reverence for his beneficence we do not willingly withhold the praise of genius ; a man of exalted merit becomes at once an accomplished writer, as a beauty finds no great difficulty in passing for a wit.

Granville was a man illustrious by his birth, and therefore attracted notice: since he is by Pope styled “ the polite,” he must be supposed elegant in his manners, and generally loved: he was in times of contest and turbulence steady to his party, and obtained that esteem which is always conferred upon firmness and consistency. With those advantages, having learned the art of versifying, he declared himself a poet, and his claim to the laurel was allowed.

But by a critick of a later generation who takes up his book without any favourable prejudices, the praise already received will be thought sufficient; for his works do not shew him to have had much comprehension from nature, or illumination from learning. He seems to have had no ambition above the imitations of Waller, of whom he has copied the faults,  
and

and very little more. He is for ever amusing himself with the puerilities of mythology; his King is Jupiter, who, if the Queen brings no children, has a barren Juno. The Queen is compounded of Juno, Venus, and Minerva: His poem on the dutchess of Grafton's lawsuit, after having rattled a while with Juno and Pallas, Mars and Alcides, Cassiope, Niobe, and the Propetides, Hercules, Minos, and Rhadamanthus, at last concludes its folly with profaneness.

His verses to Mira, which are most frequently mentioned, have little in them of either art or nature, of the sentiments of a lover, or the language of a poet: there may be found, now-and-then, a happier effort; but they are commonly feeble and unaffecting, or forced and extravagant.

His little pieces are seldom either spritely or elegant, either keen or weighty. They are trifles written by idleness, and published by vanity. But his Prologues and Epilogues have a just claim to praise.

The *Progress of Beauty* seems one of his most elaborate pieces, and is not deficient in splendor and gaiety; but the merit of original thought



thought is wanting. Its highest praise is the spirit with which he celebrates king James's confort, when she was a queen no longer.

The *Essay on unnatural Flights in Poetry* is not inelegant nor injudicious, and has something of vigour beyond most of his other performances: his precepts are just, and his cautions proper, they are indeed not new, but in a didactic poem novelty is to be expected only in the ornaments and illustrations. His poetical precepts are accompanied with agreeable and instructive notes.

The Masque of *Peleus and Thetis* has here and there a pretty line; but it is not always melodious, and the conclusion is wretched.

In his *British Enchanters* he has bidden defiance to all chronology, by confounding the inconsistent manners of different ages; but the dialogue has often the air of Dryden's rhyming plays; and the songs are lively, though not very correct. This is, I think, far the best of his works, for if it has many faults, it has likewise passages which are at least pretty, though they do not rise to any high degree of excellence.

## Y A L D E N.

**T**HOMAS YALDEN, the sixth son of Mr. John Yalden of Suffex, was born in the city of Exeter in 1671. Having been educated in the grammar-school belonging to Magdalen College in Oxford, he was in 1690, at the age of nineteen, admitted commoner of Magdalen Hall, under the tuition of *Josiah Pullen*, a man whose name is still remembered in the university. He became next year one of the scholars of Magdalen College, where he was distinguished by a lucky accident.

It was his turn, one day, to pronounce a declamation; and Dr. Hough, the president, happening to attend, thought the composition too good to be the speaker's. Some time after, the doctor finding him a little irregularly busy  
in

in the library, set him an exercise for punishment; and, that he might not be deceived by any artifice, locked the door. Yalden, as it happened, had been lately reading on the subject given, and produced with little difficulty a composition which so pleased the president, that he told him his former suspicions, and promised to favour him.

Among his contemporaries in the college were Addison and Sacheverell, men who were in those times friends, and who both adopted Yalden to their intimacy. Yalden continued, throughout his life, to think as probably he thought at first, yet did not lose the friendship of Addison.

When Namur was taken by king William, Yalden made an ode. There was never any reign more celebrated by the poets than that of William, who had very little regard for song himself, but happened to employ ministers who pleased themselves with the praise of patronage.

Of this ode mention is made in an humorous poem of that time, called *The Oxford Laureat*; in which, after many claims had been made and rejected, Yalden is represented as demand-

ing the laurel, and as being called to his trial, instead of receiving a reward.

His crime was for being a felon in verse,  
 And presenting his theft to the king ;  
 The first was a trick not uncommon or scarce,  
 But the last was an impudent thing :  
 Yet what he had stol'n was so little worth stealing.  
 They forgave him the damage and cost :  
 Had he ta'en the whole ode, as he took it piece-mealing,  
 They had fin'd him but ten-pence at most.

The poet whom he was charged with robbing was Congreve.

He wrote another poem on the death of the duke of Gloucester.

In 1710 he became fellow of the college ; and next year, entering into orders, was presented by the society with a living in Warwickshire, consistent with the fellowship, and chosen lecturer of moral philosophy, a very honourable office.

On the accession of queen Anne he wrote another poem ; and is said, by the author of the *Biograpbia*, to have declared himself of the party who had the honourable distinction of High-churchmen.

In

In 1706 he was received into the family of the duke of Beaufort. Next year he became doctor in divinity, and soon after resigned his fellowship and lecture; and, as a token of his gratitude, gave the college a picture of their founder.

He was made rector of *Chabton* and *Cleanville*, two adjoining towns and benefices in Hertfordshire; and had the piebends, or sinecures, of *Deans*, *Hains*, and *Pendles*, in Devonshire. He had before \* been chosen, in 1698, preacher of Bridewell Hospital, upon the resignation of Dr. Atterbury †.

From this time he seems to have led a quiet and inoffensive life, till the clamour was raised about Atterbury's plot. Every loyal eye was on the watch for abettors or partakers of the horrid conspiracy; and Dr. Yalden, having some acquaintance with the bishop, and being familiarly conversant with Kelly his secretary, fell under suspicion, and was taken into custody.

\* Not till long after. N.

† Dr. Atterbury retained the office of preacher at Bridewell, till his promotion to the Bishoprick of Rochester. Dr. Takers succeeded him as preacher in June, 1713. N.

Upon his examination he was charged with a dangerous correspondence with Kelly. The correspondence he acknowledged; but maintained, that it had no treasonable tendency. His papers were seized; but nothing was found that could fix a crime upon him, except two words in his pocket-book, *thorough-paced doctrine*. This expression the imagination of his examiners had impregnated with treason, and the doctor was enjoined to explain them. Thus pressed, he told them that the words had lain unheeded in his pocket-book from the time of queen Anne, and that he was ashamed to give an account of them; but the truth was, that he had gratified his curiosity one day, by hearing *Daniel Burges's* in the pulpit, and those words was a memorial hint of a remarkable sentence by which he warned his congregation to "beware of" thorough-paced doctrine, "that doctrine which coming in at "one ear, paces through the head, and goes out at the other."

Nothing worse than this appearing in his papers, and no evidence arising against him, he was set at liberty.

It

It will not be supposed that a man of this character attained high dignities in the church; but he still retained the friendship, and frequented the conversation, of a very numerous and splendid set of acquaintance. He died July 16, 1736, in the 66th year of his age.

Of his poems, many are of that irregular kind, which, when he formed his poetical character, was supposed to be Pindarick. Having fixed his attention on Cowley as a model, he has attempted in some sort to rival him, and has written a *Hymn to Darkness*, evidently as a counter-part to Cowley's *Hymn to Light*.

This hymn seems to be his best performance, and is, for the most part, imagined with great vigour, and expressed with great propriety. I will not transcribe it. The seven first stanzas are good, but the third, fourth, and seventh, are the best; the eighth seems to involve a contradiction, the tenth is exquisitely beautiful; the thirteenth, fourteenth, and fifteenth, are partly mythological, and partly religious, and therefore not suitable to each other; he might better have made the whole merely philosophical.

There are two stanzas in this poem where Yalden may be suspected, though hardly convicted, of having consulted the *Hymnus ad Uram* of *Wovrus*, in the sixth stanza, which answers in some sort to these lines :

Illa suo præest nocturnis numine sacris—  
Perque vias errare novis dat spectra figuris,  
Manesque excitos medios ululare per agros  
Sub noctem, et questu notos complere penates.

And again at the conclusion :-

Illa suo senium secludit corpore toto  
Haud numerans jugi fugientia secula lapsu,  
Ergo ubi postremum mundi compage solutâ  
Hanc rerum molem suprema absumpserit hora  
Ipsa leves cineres nube amplectetur opacâ,  
Et prisco imperio rursus dominabitur UMBRA.

His *Hymn to Light* is not equal to the other. He seems to think that there is an East absolute and positive where the Morning rises.

In the last stanza, having mentioned the sudden eruption of new created Light, he says,

A while th' Almighty wondering stood.

He



He ought to have remembered that Infinite Knowledge can never wonder. All wonder is the effect of novelty upon ignorance.

Of his other poems it is sufficient to say that they deserve perusal, though they are not always exactly polished, though the rhymes are sometimes very ill sorted, and though his faults seem rather the omissions of idleness than the negligences of enthusiasm.

## T I C K E L L.

**T**HOMAS TICKELL, the son of the reverend Richard Tickell, was born in 1686 at Bridekirk in Cumberland; and in April 1701 became a member of Queen's College in Oxford; in 1708 he was made Master of Arts, and two years afterwards was chosen Fellow; for which, as he did not comply with the statutes by taking orders, he obtained a dispensation from the Crown. He held his Fellowship till 1726, and then vacated it, by marrying, in that year, at Dublin.

Tickell was not one of those scholars who wear away their lives in closets; he entered early into the world, and was long busy in publick affairs; in which he was initiated under the patronage of Addison, whose notice  
he

he is said to have gained by his verses in praise of *Rosamond*.

To those verses it would not have been just to deny regard ; for they contain some of the most elegant encomiastick strains ; and, among the innumerable poems of the same kind, it will be hard to find one with which they need to fear a comparison. It may deserve observation, that when Pope wrote long afterwards in praise of Addison, he has copied, at least has resembled Tickell.

Let joy salute fair Rosamonda's shade,  
And wreaths of myrtle crown the lovely maid.  
While now perhaps with Dido's ghost she roves,  
And hears and tells the story of their loves,  
Alike they mourn, alike they bless their fate,  
Since Love, which made them wretched, made  
                  them great.

Nor longer that relentless doom bemoan,  
Which gain'd a Virgil and an Addison.

TICKELL.

Then future ages with delight shall see  
How Plato's, Bacon's, Newton's, looks agree ;  
Or in fair series laurel'd bards be shown,  
A Virgil there, and here an Addison.

POPE.

He

He produced another piece of the same kind at the appearance of *Cato*, with equal skill, but not equal happiness.

When the ministers of queen Anne were negotiating with France, Tickell published *The Prospect of Peace*, a poem, of which the tendency was to reclaim the nation from the pride of conquest to the pleasures of tranquillity. How far Tickell, whom Swift afterwards mentioned as *Whiggissimus*, had then connected himself with any party, I know not; this poem certainly did not flatter the practices, or promote the opinions, of the men by whom he was afterwards befriended.

Mr. Addison, however he hated the men then in power, suffered his friendship to prevail over his publick spirit, and gave in the *Spectator* such praises of Tickell's poem, that when, after having long wished to peruse it, I laid hold on it at last, I thought it unequal to the honours which it had received, and found it a piece to be approved rather than admired. But the hope excited by a work of genius, being general and indefinite, is rarely gratified. It was read at that time with so much favour, that six editions were sold.

At

At the arrival of king George he sung *the Royal Progress*; which being inserted in the *Spectator* is well known, and of which it is just to say, that it is neither high nor low.

The poetical incident of most importance in Tickell's life was his publication of the first book of the *Iliad* as translated by himself, an apparent opposition to Pope's *Homer*, of which the first part made its entrance into the world at the same time.

Addison declared that the rival versions were both good, but that Tickell's was the best that ever was made; and with Addison the wits, his adherents and followers, were certain to concur. Pope does not appear to have been much dismayed; "for," says he, "I have the town, that is, the mob on my side." But he remarks, "that it is comen for the smaller party to make up in diligence what they want in numbers, he appeals to the people as his proper judges; and if they are not inclined to condemn him, he is in little care about the high-flyers at Button's.

Pope did not long think Addison an impartial judge; for he considered him as the writer of Tickell's version. The reasons for his suspicion

picion I will literally transcribe from Mr Spence's Collection.

“ There had been a coldness (said Mr. Pope)  
 “ between Mr. Addison and me for some time;  
 “ and we had not been in company together,  
 “ for a good while, any where but at Button's  
 “ coffee-house, where I used to see him almost  
 “ every day.—On his meeting me there, one  
 “ day in particular, he took me aside, and  
 “ said he should be glad to dine with me, at  
 “ such a tavern, if I staid till those people  
 “ were gone (Budgell and Philips). He went  
 “ accordingly; and after dinner Mr. Addison  
 “ said, ‘ That he had wanted for some time to  
 “ talk with me; that his friend Tickell had  
 “ formerly, whilst at Oxford, translated the  
 “ first book of the *Iliad*; that he designed to  
 “ print it, and had desired him to look it over;  
 “ that he must therefore beg that I would not  
 “ desire him to look over my first book, be-  
 “ cause, if he did, it would have the air of  
 “ double dealing.’ I assured him that I did not  
 “ at all take it ill of Mr. Tickell that he was  
 “ going to publish his translation; that he cer-  
 “ tainly had as much right to translate any au-  
 “ thor as myself; and that publishing both was  
 “ entering

“entering on a fair stage. I then added, that  
 “I would not desire him to look over my first  
 “book of the *Iliad*, because he had looked over  
 “Mr. Tickell’s; but could wish to have the  
 “benefit of his observations on my second,  
 “which I had then finished, and which Mr.  
 “Tickell had not touched upon. Accordingly  
 “I sent him the second book the next morn-  
 “ing: and Mr. Addison a few days after re-  
 “turned it, with very high commendations.—  
 “Soon after it was generally known that Mr.  
 “Tickell was publishing the first book of the  
 “*Iliad*, I met Dr. Young in the street; and,  
 “upon our falling into that subject, the Doctor  
 “expressed a great deal of surprize at Tickell’s  
 “having had such a translation so long by him.  
 “He said, that it was inconceivable to him,  
 “and that there must be some mistake in the  
 “matter; that each used to communicate to  
 “the other whatever verses they wrote, even  
 “to the least things; that Tickell could not  
 “have been busied in so long a work there  
 “without his knowing something of the mat-  
 “ter; and that he had never heard a single  
 “word on it till on this occasion. This sur-  
 “prise of Dr. Young, together with what  
 “Steele

“ Steele has said against Tickell in relation to  
 “ this affair, make it highly probable that there  
 “ was some underhand dealing in that business;  
 “ and indeed Tickell himself, who is a very  
 “ fair worthy man, has since, in a manner, as  
 “ good as owned it to me. When it was in-  
 “ troduced into a conversation between Mr.  
 “ Tickell and Mr. Pope by a third person,  
 “ Tickell did not deny it ; which, considering  
 “ his honour and zeal for his departed friend,  
 “ was the same as owning it.”

Upon these suspicions, with which Dr. Warburton hints that other circumstances concurred, Pope always in his *Art of Sinking* quotes this book as the work of Addison.

To compare the two translations would be tedious ; the palm is now given universally to Pope ; but I think the first lines of Tickell's were rather to be preferred, and Pope seems to have since borrowed something from them in the correction of his own.

When the Hanover succession was disputed, Tickell gave what assistance his pen would supply. His *Letter to Avignon* stands high among party-poems ; it expresses contempt without coarseness, and superiority without insolence. It  
 had



had the success which it deserved, being five times printed.

He was now intimately united to Mr. Addison, who when he went into Ireland as secretary to the Lord Sunderland, took him thither, and employed him in publick business; and when (1717) afterwards he rose to be secretary of state, made him under-secretary. Their friendship seems to have continued without abatement, for when Addison died, he left him the charge of publishing his works, with a solemn recommendation to the patronage of Craggs.

To these works he prefixed an elegy on the author, which could owe none of its beauties to the assistance which might be suspected to have strengthened or embellished his earlier compositions, but neither he nor Addison ever produced nobler lines than are contained in the third and fourth paragraphs; nor is a more sublime or more elegant funeral-poem to be found in the whole compass of English literature.

He was afterwards (about 1725) made secretary to the Lords justices of Ireland, a place of great honour, in which he continued till 1740,

when he died on the twenty-third of April at Bath.

Of the poems yet unmentioned the longest is *Kensington-Gardens*, of which the versification is smooth and elegant; but the fiction unskillfully compounded of Grecian Deities and Gothick Fairies. Neither species of those exploded Beings could have done much; and when they are brought together, they only make each other contemptible. To Tickell, however, cannot be refused a high place among the minor poets; nor should it be forgotten that he was one of the contributors to the *Spectator*. With respect to his personal character, he is said to have been a man of gay conversation, at least a temperate lover of wine and company, and in his domestick relations without censure.

HAMMOND,

## H A M M O N D.

**O**F Mr. HAMMOND, though he be well remembered as a man esteemed and careſſed by the elegant and the great, I was at firſt able to obtain no other memorials than ſuch as are ſupplied by a book called *Cibber's Lives of the Poets* ; of which I take this opportunity to teſtify that it was not written, nor, I believe, ever ſeen, by either of the Cibbers ; but was the work of Robert Shiels, a native of Scotland, a man of very acute underſtanding, though with little ſcholaſtick education, who, not long after the publication of his work, died in London of a conſumption. His life was virtuous, and his end was pious. Theophilus Cibber, then a priſoner for debt, imparted, as I was told, his name for ten guinea's

The manuscript of Shiels is now in my possession.

I have since found that Mr. Shiels, though he was no negligent enquirer, had been misled by false accounts; for he relates that James Hammond, the author of the *Elegies*, was the son of a Turkey merchant, and had some office at the prince of Wales's court, till love of a lady, whose name was Dashwood, for a time disorder'd his understanding. He was unextinguishably amorous, and his mistress inexorably cruel.

Of this narrative, part is true, and part false. He was the second son of Anthony Hammond, a man of note among the wits, poets, and parliamentary orators, in the beginning of this century, who was allied to Sir Robert Walpole by marrying his sister<sup>†</sup>. He was born about 1710, and educated at Westminster-school, but it does not appear that he was of any university. He was equerry to the prince of Wales, and seems to have come very early into

\* This account is still erroneous. James Hammond our author was of a different family, the second son of Anthony Hammond, of Somersham-place, in the county of Huntingdon, Esq. See *Gent Mag* vol. LVII. p 780. E.

publick notice, and to have been distinguished by those whose friendship prejudiced mankind at that time in favour of the man on whom they were bestowed, for he was the companion of Cobham, Lyttleton, and Chesterfield. He is said to have divided his life between pleasure and books, in his retirement forgetting the town, and in his gaiety losing the student. Of his literary hours all the effects are here exhibited, of which the Elegies were written very early, and the Prologue not long before his death.

In 1741, he was chosen into parliament for Truro in Cornwall, probably one of those who were elected by the Prince's influence, and died next year in June at Stowe, the famous seat of the lord Cobham. His mistress long outlived him, and in 1779 died unmarried. The character which her lover bequeathed her was, indeed, not likely to attract courtship.

The Elegies were published after his death; and while the writer's name was remembered with fondness, they were read with a resolution to admire them. The recommendatory preface of the editor, who was then believed, and is

now affirmed by Dr. Maty, to be the earl of Chesterfield, raised strong prejudices in their favour.

But of the prefacer, whoever he was, it may be reasonably suspected that he never read the poems, for he professes to value them for a very high species of excellence, and recommends them as the genuine effusions of the mind, which expresses a real passion in the language of nature. But the truth is, these elegies have neither passion, nature, nor manners. Where there is fiction, there is no passion; he that describes himself as a shepherd, and his Næra or Delia, as a shepherdess, and talks of goats and lambs, feels no passion. He that courts his mistress with Roman imagery deserves to lose her; for she may with good reason suspect his sincerity. Hammond has few sentiments drawn from nature, and few images from modern life. He produces nothing but frigid pedantry. It would be hard to find in all his productions three stanzas that deserve to be remembered.

Like other lovers, he threatens the lady with dying; and what then shall follow?

Wilt

Wilt thou in tears thy lover's corse attend ;  
With eyes averted light the solemn pyre,  
Till all around the doleful flames ascend,  
Then, slowly sinking, by degrees expire?  
To sooth the hovering soul be thine the care,  
With plaintive cries to lead the mournful band.  
In fable weeds the golden vase to bear,  
And cull my ashes with thy trembling hand :  
Panchaia's odours be their costly feast,  
And all the pride of Asia's fragrant year,  
Give them the treasures of the farthest East,  
And, what is still more precious, give thy tear.

Surely no blame can fall upon a nymph who rejected a swain of so little meaning.

His verses are not rugged, but they have no sweetness ; they never glide in a stream of melody. Why Hammond or other writers have thought the quatrain of ten syllables elegiac, it is difficult to tell. The character of the Elegy is gentleness and tenuity ; but this stanza has been pronounced by Dryden, whose knowledge of English metre was not inconsiderable, to be the most magnificent of all the measures which our language affords.

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## S O M E R V I L E.

**O**F Mr. SOMERVILE's life I am not able to say any thing that can satisfy curiosity.

He was a gentleman whose estate was in Warwickshire; his house, where he was born in 1692, is called Edilton, a seat inherited from a long line of ancestors; for he was said to be of the first family in his county. He tells of himself, that he was born near the Avon's banks. He was bred at Winchester-school, and was elected fellow of New College. It does not appear that in the places of his education, he exhibited any uncommon proofs of genius or literature. His powers were first displayed in the country, where he was distinguished



guished as a poet, a gentleman, and a skilful and useful justice of the Peace.

Of the close of his life, those whom his poems have delighted will read with pain the following account, copied from the Letters of his friend Shenstone, by whom he was too much resembled.

“—Our old friend Somervile is dead! I  
 “did not imagine I could have been so sorry  
 “as I find myself on this occasion.—*Sublatum*  
 “*quærimus*. I can now excuse all his foibles;  
 “impute them to age, and to distress of cir-  
 “cumstances; the last of these considerations  
 “wings my very soul to think on. For a  
 “man of high spirit, conscious of having (at  
 “least in one production) generally pleased the  
 “world, to be plagued and threatened by  
 “wretches that are low in every sense; to be  
 “forced to drink himself into pains of the  
 “body, in order to get rid of the pains of the  
 “mind, is a misery.”—He died July 19, 1742,  
 and was buried at Wotton, near Henley on  
 Arden.

His distresses need not be much pitied: his  
 estate is said to be fifteen hundred a year, which  
 by his death has devolved to lord Somervile of  
 Scotland.

Scotland. His mother indeed, who lived till ninety, had a jointure of six hundred.

It is with regret that I find myself not better enabled to exhibit memorials of a writer, who at least must be allowed to have set a good example to men of his own class, by devoting part of his time to elegant knowledge, and who has shewn, by the subjects which his poetry has adorned, that it is practicable to be at once a skilful sportsman and a man of letters.

Somerville has tried many modes of poetry; and though perhaps he has not in any reached such excellence as to raise much envy, it may commonly be said at least that "he writes very well for a gentleman." His serious pieces are sometimes elevated, and his trifles are sometimes elegant. In his verses to Addison, the couplet which mentions *Chloë* is written with the most exquisite delicacy of praise; it exhibits one of those happy strokes that are seldom attained. In his Odes to Marlborough there are beautiful lines; but in the second Ode he shews that he knew little of his hero, when he talks of his private virtues. His subjects are commonly such as require no  
great

great depth of thought or energy of expression. His Fables are generally stale, and therefore excite no curiosity. Of his favourite, *The Two Springs*, the fiction is unnatural, and the moral inconsequential. In his Tales there is too much coarseness, with too little care of language, and not sufficient rapidity of narration.

His great work is his *Chace*, which he undertook in his maturer age, when his ear was improved to the approbation of blank verse, of which however his two first lines give a bad specimen. To this poem praise cannot be totally denied. He is allowed by sportsmen to write with great intelligence of his subject, which is the first requisite to excellence, and though it is impossible to interest the common readers of verse in the dangers or pleasures of the chace, he has done all that transition and variety could easily effect; and has with great propriety enlarged his plan by the modes of hunting used in other countries.

With still less judgement did he chuse blank verse as the vehicle of *Rural Sports*. If blank verse be not tumid and gorgeous, it is crippled  
 prose;

prose ; and familiar images in laboured language have nothing to recommend them but absurd novelty, which, wanting the attractions of Nature, cannot please long. One excellence of the *Splendid Shilling* is, that it is short. Disguise can gratify no longer than it deceives.

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S A V A G E.

IT has been observed in all ages, that the advantages of nature or of fortune have contributed very little to the promotion of happiness; and that those whom the splendour of their rank, or the extent of their capacity, have placed upon the summit of human life, have not often given any just occasion to envy in those who look up to them from a lower station: whether it be that apparent superiority incites great designs, and great designs are naturally liable to fatal miscarriages, or that the general lot of mankind is misery, and the misfortunes of those, whose eminence drew upon them an universal attention, have been more carefully recorded, because they were more generally observed, and have in reality been  
only;

only more conspicuous than those of others, not more frequent, or more severe.

That affluence and power, advantages extrinsic and adventitious, and therefore easily separable from those by whom they are possessed, should very often flatter the mind with expectations of felicity which they cannot give, raises no astonishment; but it seems rational to hope, that intellectual greatness should produce better effects; that minds qualified for great attainments should first endeavour their own benefit, and that they, who are most able to teach others the way to happiness, should with most certainty follow it themselves.

But this expectation, however plausible, has been very frequently disappointed. The heroes of literary as well as civil history have been very often no less remarkable for what they have suffered, than for what they have achieved; and volumes have been written only to enumerate the miseries of the learned, and relate their unhappy lives, and untimely deaths.

To these mournful narratives, I am about to add the Life of Richard Savage, a man whose writings entitle him to an eminent rank in the classes of learning, and whose misfortunes

tunes claim a degree of compassion, not always due to the unhappy, as they were often the consequences of the crimes of others, rather than his own.

In the year 1697, Anne Countess of Macclesfield, having lived some time upon very uneasy terms with her husband, thought a public confession of adultery the most obvious and expeditious method of obtaining her liberty; and therefore declared, that the child, with which she was then great, was begotten by the Earl Rivers. This, as may be imagined, made her husband no less desirous of a separation than herself, and he prosecuted his design in the most effectual manner; for he applied not to the ecclesiastical courts for a divorce, but to the parliament for an act, by which his marriage might be dissolved, the nuptial contract annulled, and the children of his wife illegitimated. This act, after the usual deliberation, he obtained, though without the approbation of some, who considered marriage as an affair only cognizable by ecclesiastical judges\*; and on March 3d was separated from

\* This year was made remarkable by the dissolution of a marriage

from his wife, whose fortune, which was very great, was repaid her, and who having, as well as her husband, the liberty of making another choice, was in a short time married to Colonel Brett.

While the earl of Macclesfield was prosecuting this affair, his wife was, on the 10th of January 1697-8, delivered of a son, and the Earl Rivers, by appearing to consider him as his own, left none any reason to doubt of the sincerity of her declaration; for he was his godfather, and gave him his own name, which was by his direction inserted in the register of St. Andrew's parish in Holborn, but unfortunately left him to the care of his mother, whom, as she was now set free from her husband, he probably imagined likely to treat with great

marriage solemnized in the face of the church. SALMON'S REVIEW.

The following protest is registered in the books of the House of Lords.

#### Dissentient.

Because that we conceive that this is the first bill of that nature that hath passed, where there was not a divorce first obtained in the Spiritual Court; which we look upon as an ill precedent, and may be of dangerous consequence in the future.

HALIFAX.

ROCHESTER

tendernefs



tendernefs the child that had contributed to fo pleafing an event. It is not indeed eafy to difcover what motives could be found to over-balance that natural affection of a parent, or what intereft could be promoted by neglect or cruelty. The dread of fhame or of poverty, by which fome wretches have been incited to abandon or to murder their children, cannot be fupposed to have affected a woman who had proclaimed her crimes and folicted reproach, and on whom the clemency of the legiflature had undeservedly beftowed a fortune, which would have been very little diminished by the expences which the care of her child could have brought upon her. It was therefore not likely that ſhe would be wicked without temptation ; that ſhe would look upon her fon from his birth with a kind of repentment and abhorrence ; and, inftead of fupporting, affifting, and defending him, delight to fee him ſtruggling with mifery, or that ſhe would take every opportunity of aggravating his misfortunes, and obſtructing his resources, and with an implacable and reſtlefs cruelty continue her perfecution from the firſt hour of his life to the laſt.

But whatever were her motives, no sooner was her son born, than she discovered a resolution of disowning him; and in a very short time removed him from her sight, by committing him to the care of a poor woman, whom she directed to educate him as her own, and enjoined never to inform him of his true parents.

Such was the beginning of the life of Richard Savage. Born with a legal claim to honour and to affluence, he was in two months illegitimated by the parliament, and disowned by his mother, doomed to poverty and obscurity, and launched upon the ocean of life, only that he might be swallowed by its quicksands, or dashed upon its rocks.

His mother could not indeed infect others with the same cruelty. As it was impossible to avoid the inquiries which the curiosity or tenderness of her relations made after her child, she was obliged to give some account of the measures she had taken; and her Mother, the Lady Mason, whether in approbation of her design, or to prevent more criminal contrivances, engaged to transact with the nurse, to pay her for  
her

her care, and to superintend the education of the child.

In this charitable office she was assisted by his godmother Mrs. Lloyd, who, while she lived, always looked upon him with that tenderness which the barbarity of his mother made peculiarly necessary, but her death, which happened in his tenth year, was another of the misfortunes of his childhood; for though she kindly endeavoured to alleviate his loss by a legacy of three hundred pounds, yet, as he had none to prosecute his claim, to shelter him from oppression, or call-in law to the assistance of justice, her will was eluded by the executors, and no part of the money was ever paid.

He was, however, not yet wholly abandoned. The Lady Mason still continued her care, and directed him to be placed at a small grammar-school near St. Alban's, where he was called by the name of his nurse, without the least intimation that he had a claim to any other.

Here he was initiated in literature, and passed through several of the classes, with what rapidity or with what applause cannot now be

known. As he always spoke with respect of his master, it is probable that the mean rank, in which he then appeared, did not hinder his genius from being distinguished, or his industry from being rewarded, and if in so low a state he obtained distinction and rewards, it is not likely that they were gained but by genius and industry.

It is very reasonable to conjecture, that his application was equal to his abilities, because his improvement was more than proportioned to the opportunities which he enjoyed; nor can it be doubted, that if his earliest productions had been preserved, like those of happier students, we might in some have found vigorous sallies of that sprightly humour which distinguishes *The Author to be let*, and in others strong touches of that imagination which painted the solemn scenes of *The Wanderer*.

While he was thus cultivating his genius, his father the Earl of Rivers was seized with a distemper, which in a short time put an end to his life\*. He had frequently inquired after his son, and had always been amused with

\* He died 18 Aug. 1712. E.

fallacious and evasive answers ; but, being now in his own opinion on his death-bed, he thought it his duty to provide for him among his other natural children, and therefore demanded a positive account of him, with an importunity not to be diverted or denied. His mother, who could no longer refuse an answer, determined at least to give such as should cut him off for ever from that happiness which competence affords, and therefore declared that he was dead, which is perhaps the first instance of a lye invented by a mother to deprive her son of a provision which was designed him by another, and which she could not expect herself, though he should lose it.

This was therefore an act of wickedness which could not be defeated, because it could not be suspected ; the Earl did not imagine there could exist in a human form a mother that would ruin her son without enriching herself, and therefore bestowed upon some other person six thousand pounds, which he had in his will bequeathed to Savage.

The same cruelty which incited his mother to intercept this provision which had been intended him, prompted her in a short time to

another project, a project worthy of such a disposition. She endeavoured to rid herself from the danger of being at any time made known to him, by sending him secretly to the American plantations \*.

By whose kindness this scheme was counteracted, or by whose interposition she was induced to lay aside her design, I know not, it is not improbable that the Lady Mason might persuade or compel her to desist, or perhaps she could not easily find accomplices wicked enough to concur in so cruel an action; for it may be conceived, that those who had by a long gradation of guilt hardened their hearts against the sense of common wickedness, would yet be shocked at the design of a mother to expose her son to slavery and want, to expose him without interest, and without provocation, and Savage might on this occasion find protectors and advocates among those who had long traded in crimes, and whom compassion had never touched before.

Being hindered, by whatever means, from banishing him into another country, she formed

\*. Savage's Preface to his Miscellany.

soon after a scheme for burying him in poverty and obscurity in his own ; and that his station of life, if not the place of his residence, might keep him for ever at a distance from her, she ordered him to be placed with a shoe-maker in Holborn, that, after the usual time of trial, he might become his apprentice \*.

It is generally reported, that this project was for some time successful, and that Savage was employed at the awl longer than he was willing to confess, nor was it perhaps any great advantage to him, that an unexpected discovery determined him to quit his occupation.

About this time his nurse, who had always treated him as her own son, died, and it was natural for him to take care of those effects which by her death were, as he imagined, become his own : he therefore went to her house, opened her boxes, and examined her papers, among which he found some letters written to her by the Lady Mason, which informed him of his birth, and the reasons for which it was concealed.

\* Savage's Preface to his Miscellany.

He was no longer satisfied with the employment which had been allotted him, but thought he had a right to share the affluence of his mother ; and therefore without scruple applied to her as her son, and made use of every art to awaken her tenderness, and attract her regard. But neither his letters, nor the interposition of those friends which his merit or his distress procured him, made any impression upon her mind. She still resolved to neglect, though she could no longer disown him.

It was to no purpose that he frequently solicited her to admit him to see her ; she avoided him with the most vigilant precaution, and ordered him to be excluded from her house, by whomsoever he might be introduced, and what reason soever he might give for entering it

Savage was at the same time so touched with the discovery of his real mother, that it was his frequent practice to walk in the dark evenings \* for several hours before her door, in hopes of seeing her as she might come by acci-

\* See the Plain Dealer.



dent to the window, or crosses her apartment with a candle in her hand.

But all his assiduity and tenderness were without effect, for he could neither soften her heart, nor open her hand, and was reduced to the utmost miseries of want, while he was endeavouring to awaken the affection of a mother. He was therefore obliged to seek some other means of support, and, having no profession, became by necessity an author.

At this time the attention of the literary world was engrossed by the Bangorian controversy, which filled the press with pamphlets, and the coffee-houses with disputants. Of this subject, as most popular, he made choice for his first attempt, and, without any other knowledge of the question than he had casually collected from conversation, published a poem against the Bishop\*.

What was the success or merit of this performance, I know not; it was probably lost among the innumerable pamphlets to which that dispute gave occasion. Mr. Savage was himself in a little time ashamed of it, and en-

\* It was called "The Battle of the Pamphlets." E.  
deavoured

deavoured to suppress it, by destroying all the copies that he could collect.

He then attempted a more gainful kind of writing \*, and in his eighteenth year offered to the stage a comedy borrowed from a Spanish plot, which was refused by the players, and was therefore given by him to Mr. Bullock, who, having more interest, made some slight alterations, and brought it upon the stage, under the title of † WOMAN'S A RIDDLE, but allowed the unhappy author no part of the profit.

Not discouraged however at his repulse, he wrote two years afterwards LOVE IN A VEIL, another comedy, borrowed likewise from the Spanish, but with little better success than before: though it was received and acted, yet it appeared so late in the year, that the author obtained no other advantage from it than the acquaintance of Sir Richard Steele, and Mr. Wilks, by whom he was pitied, caressed, and relieved.

\* Jacob's Lives of the Dramatick Poets. Dr. J.

† This play was printed first in 8vo; and afterwards in 12mo, the fifth edition. Dr. J.

Sir Richard Steele, having declared in his favour with all the ardour of benevolence which constituted his character, promoted his interest with the utmost zeal, related his misfortunes, applauded his merit, took all the opportunities of recommending him, and asserted, that "the inhumanity of his mother had given him a right to find every good man his father."

Nor was Mr. Savage admitted to his acquaintance only, but to his confidence, of which he sometimes related an instance too extraordinary to be omitted, as it affords a very just idea of his patron's character.

He was once desired by Sir Richard, with an air of the utmost importance, to come very early to his house the next morning. Mr. Savage came as he had promised, found the chariot at the door, and Sir Richard waiting for him, and ready to go out. What was intended, and whither they were to go, Savage could not conjecture, and was not willing to enquire; but immediately seated himself with Sir Richard. The coachman was ordered to

\* Plain Dealer.

drive,

drive, and they hurried with the utmost expedition to Hyde-Park Corner, where they stopped at a petty tavern, and retired to a private room. Sir Richard then informed him, that he intended to publish a pamphlet, and that he had desired him to come thither that he might write for him. He soon sat down to the work. Sir Richard dictated, and Savage wrote, till the dinner that had been ordered was put upon the table. Savage was surprized at the meanness of the entertainment, and after some hesitation ventured to ask for wine, which Sir Richard, not without reluctance, ordered to be brought. They then finished their dinner, and proceeded in their pamphlet, which they concluded in the afternoon.

Mr. Savage then imagined his task over, and expected that Sir Richard would call for the reckoning and return home : but his expectations deceived him, for Sir Richard told him, that he was without money, and that the pamphlet must be sold before the dinner could be paid for ; and Savage was therefore obliged to go and offer their new production to sale for two guineas, which with some difficulty he obtained. Sir Richard then returned home,  
having

having retired that day only to avoid his creditors, and composed the pamphlet only to discharge his reckoning.

Mr. Savage related another fact equally uncommon, which, though it has no relation to his life, ought to be preserved. Sir Richard Steele having one day invited to his house a great number of persons of the first quality, they were surprised at the number of liveries which surrounded the table; and after dinner, when wine and mirth had set them free from the observation of a rigid ceremony, one of them enquired of Sir Richard, how such an expensive train of domestics could be consistent with his fortune. Sir Richard very frankly confessed, that they were fellows of whom he would very willingly be rid. And being then asked, why he did not discharge them, declared that they were bailiffs, who had introduced themselves with an execution, and whom, since he could not send them away, he had thought it convenient to embellish with liveries, that they might do him credit while they staid.

His friends were diverted with the expedient, and by paying the debt discharged their attendance,

dance, having obliged Sir Richard to promise that they should never again find him graced with a retinue of the same kind.

Under such a tutor, Mr. Savage was not likely to learn prudence or frugality and perhaps many of the misfortunes which the want of those virtues brought upon him in the following parts of his life, might be justly imputed to so unimproving an example.

Nor did the kindness of Sir Richard end in common favours. He proposed to have established him in some settled scheme of life, and to have contracted a kind of alliance with him, by marrying him to a natural daughter, on whom he intended to bestow a thousand pound. But though he was always lavish of future bounties, he conducted his affairs in such a manner, that he was very seldom able to keep his promises, or execute his own intentions: and, as he was never able to raise the sum which he had offered, the marriage was delayed. In the mean time he was officiously informed, that Mr. Savage had ridiculed him; by which he was so much exasperated, that he withdrew the allowance which he had paid him, and never afterwards admitted him to his house.

It

It is not indeed unlikely that Savage might by his imprudence expose himself to the malice of a tale-bearer; for his patron had many follies, which, as his discernment easily discovered, his imagination might sometimes incite him to mention too ludicrously. A little knowledge of the world is sufficient to discover that such weakness is very common, and that there are few who do not sometimes, in the wantonness of thoughtless mirth, or the heat of transient resentment, speak of their friends and benefactors with levity and contempt, though in their cooler moments they want neither sense of their kindness, nor reverence for their virtue. The fault therefore of Mr. Savage was rather negligence than ingratitude; but Sir Richard must likewise be acquitted of severity, for who is there that can patiently bear contempt from one whom he has relieved and supported, whose establishment he has laboured, and whose interest he has promoted?

He was now again abandoned to fortune without any other friend than Mr. Wilks; a man, who, whatever were his abilities or skill as an actor, deserves at least to be remembered  
for

for his virtues \*, which are not often to be found in the world, and perhaps less often in his profession than in others. To be humane, generous, and candid, is a very high degree of merit in any case ; but those qualities deserve still greater praise when they are found

\* As it is a loss to mankind when any good action is forgotten, I shall insert another instance of Mr. Wilks's generosity, very little known. Mr Smith, a gentleman educated at Dublin, being hindered by an impediment in his pronunciation from engaging in orders, for which his friends designed him, left his own country, and came to London in quest of employment, but found his solicitations fruitless, and his necessities every day more pressing. In this distress he wrote a tragedy, and offered it to the players, by whom it was rejected. Thus were his last hopes defeated, and he had no other prospect than of the most deplorable poverty. But Mr. Wilks thought his performance, though not perfect, at least worthy of some reward, and therefore offered him a benefit. This favour he improved with so much diligence, that the house offered him a considerable sum, with which he went to Leyden, applied himself to the study of physick, and prosecuted his design with so much diligence and success, that when Dr. Boerhaave was desired by the Czarina to recommend proper persons to introduce into Russia the practice and study of physic, Dr. Smith was one of those whom he selected. He had a considerable pension settled on him at his arrival, and was one of the chief physicians at the Russian court. Dr. J.

A Letter from Dr. Smith in Russia to Mr. Wilks, is printed in Chetwood's History of the Stage. E.

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in that condition, which makes almost every other man, for whatever reason, contemptuous, insolent, petulant, selfish, and brutal.

As Mr. Wilks was one of those to whom calamity seldom complained without relief, he naturally took an unfortunate wit into his protection, and not only assisted him in any casual distresses, but continued an equal and steady kindness to the time of his death.

By his interposition Mr. Savage once obtained from his mother \* fifty pounds, and a promise of one hundred and fifty more; but it was the fate of this unhappy man, that few promises of any advantage to him were performed. His mother was infected among others with the general madness of the South Sea traffic; and, having been disappointed in her expectations, refused to pay what perhaps nothing but the prospect of sudden affluence prompted her to promise.

Being thus obliged to depend upon the friendship of Mr. Wilks, he was consequently an assiduous frequenter of the theatres; and in a

\* This I write upon the credit of the author of his life, which was published 1727. Dr. J.

short time the amusements of the stage took such possession of his mind, that he never was absent from a play in several years.

This constant attendance naturally procured him the acquaintance of the players, and, among others, of Mrs. Oldfield, who was so much pleased with his conversation, and touched with his misfortunes, that she allowed him a settled pension of fifty pounds a year, which was during her life regularly paid.

That this act of generosity may receive its due praise, and that the good actions of Mrs. Oldfield may not be sullied by her general character, it is proper to mention that Mr. Savage often declared in the strongest terms, that he never saw her alone, or in any other place than behind the scenes.

At her death he endeavoured to shew his gratitude in the most decent manner, by wearing mourning as for a mother; but did not celebrate her in elegies\*, because he knew that too great profusion of praise would only have revived those faults which his natural equity

\* Chetwood, however, has printed a poem on her death, which he ascribes to Mr. Savage. See History of the Stage, p. 206. E.

did not allow him to think less, because they were committed by one who favoured him; but of which, though his virtue would not endeavour to palliate them, his gratitude would not suffer him to prolong the memory or diffuse the censure.

In his *Wanderer* he has indeed taken an opportunity of mentioning her; but celebrates her not for her virtue, but her beauty, an excellence which none ever denied her: this is the only encomium with which he has rewarded her liberality, and perhaps he has even in this been too lavish of his praise. He seems to have thought, that never to mention his benefactress would have an appearance of ingratitude, though to have dedicated any particular performance to her memory would have only betrayed an officious partiality, that, without exalting her character, would have depressed his own.

He had sometimes, by the kindness of Mr. Wilks, the advantage of a benefit, on which occasions he often received uncommon marks of regard and compassion; and was once told by the Duke of Dorset, that it was just to consider him as an injured nobleman, and that in

his opinion the nobility ought to think themselves obliged, without sollicitation, to take every opportunity of supporting him by their countenance and patronage. But he had generally the mortification to hear that the whole interest of his mother was employed to frustrate his applications, and that she never left any expedient untried, by which he might be cut off from the possibility of supporting life. The same disposition she endeavoured to diffuse among all those over whom nature or fortune gave her any influence, and indeed succeeded too well in her design; but could not always propagate her effrontery with her cruelty, for some of those, whom she incited against him, were ashamed of their own conduct, and boasted of that relief which they never gave him.

In this censure I do not indiscriminately involve all his relations; for he has mentioned with gratitude the humanity of one Lady, whose name I am now unable to recollect, and to whom therefore I cannot pay the praises which she deserves for having acted well in opposition to influence, precept, and example.

The punishment which our laws inflict upon those parents who murder their infants is well known,

known, nor has its justice ever been contested ; but if they deserve death who destroy a child in its birth, what pains can be severe enough for her who forbears to destroy him only to inflict sharper miseries upon him ; who prolongs his life only to make him miserable ; and who exposes him, without care and without pity, to the malice of oppression, the caprices of chance, and the temptations of poverty ; who rejoices to see him overwhelmed with calamities , and, when his own industry, or the charity of others, has enabled him to rise for a short time above his miseries, plunges him again into his former distress ?

The kindness of his friends not affording him any constant supply, and the prospect of improving his fortune by enlarging his acquaintance necessarily leading him to places of expence, he found it necessary to \* endeavour once more at dramatick poetry, for which he was now better qualified by a more extensive knowledge, and longer observation. But having been unsuccessful in comedy, though rather for want of opportunities than genius, he

\* In 1723.

resolved now to try whether he should not be more fortunate in exhibiting a tragedy.

The story which he chose for the subject, was that of Sir Thomas Overbury, a story well adapted to the stage, though perhaps not far enough removed from the present age, to admit properly the fictions necessary to complete the plan : for the mind, which naturally loves truth, is always most offended with the violation of those truths of which we are most certain ; and we of course conceive those facts most certain, which approach nearest to our own time.

Out of this story he formed a tragedy, which, if the circumstances in which he wrote it be considered, will afford at once an uncommon proof of strength of genius, and evenness of mind, of a serenity not to be ruffled, and an imagination not to be suppressed.

During a considerable part of the time in which he was employed upon this performance, he was without lodging and often without meat ; nor had he any other conveniences for study than the fields or the streets allowed him ; there he used to walk and form his speeches, and afterwards step into a shop, beg for a few moments

moments the use of the pen and ink, and write down what he had composed, upon paper which he had picked up by accident.

If the performance of a writer thus distressed is not perfect, its faults ought surely to be imputed to a cause very different from want of genius, and must rather excite pity than provoke censure.

But when under these discouragements the tragedy was finished, there yet remained the labour of introducing it on the stage, an undertaking, which, to an ingenuous mind, was in a very high degree vexatious and disgusting; for, having little interest or reputation, he was obliged to submit himself wholly to the players, and admit, with whatever reluctance, the emendations of Mr. Cibber, which he always considered as the disgrace of his performance.

He had indeed in Mr. Hill another critic of a very different class, from whose friendship he received great assistance on many occasions, and whom he never mentioned but with the utmost tenderness and regard. He had been for some time distinguished by him with very particular kindness, and on this occasion it was natural to apply to him as an author of an

established character. He therefore sent this tragedy to him, with a short copy of verses \*, in which he desired his correction. Mr. Hill, whose humanity and politeness are generally known, readily complied with his request; but as he is remarkable for singularity of sentiment, and bold experiments in language, Mr. Savage did not think his play much improved by his innovation, and had even at that time the courage to reject several passages which he could not approve; and, what is still more laudable, Mr. Hill had the generosity not to resent the neglect of his alterations, but wrote the prologue and epilogue, in which he touches on the circumstances of the author with great tenderness.

After all these obstructions and compliances, he was only able to bring his play upon the stage in the summer, when the chief actors had retired, and the rest were in possession of the house for their own advantage. Among these, Mr. Savage was admitted to play the part of Sir Thomas Overbury †, by which he gained

\* They are printed in the present Collection.

† It was acted only three nights, the first was on June 12, 1723. When the house opened for the winter season it was once more performed, for the author's benefit, Oct. 2. E.



no great reputation, the theatre being a province for which nature seemed not to have designed him, for neither his voice, look, nor gesture, were such as were expected on the stage; and he was so much ashamed of having been reduced to appear as a player, that he always blotted out his name from the list, when a copy of his tragedy was to be shown to his friends.

In the publication of his performance he was more successful, for the rays of genius that glimmered in it, that glimmered through all the mists which poverty and Cibber had been able to spread over it, procured him the notice and esteem of many persons eminent for their rank, their virtue and their wit.

Of this play, acted, printed, and dedicated, the accumulated profits arose to an hundred pounds, which he thought at that time a very large sum, having been never master of so much before.

In the dedication\*, for which he received ten guineas, there is nothing remarkable. The Preface contains a very liberal encomium on

\* To Herbert Tryst, Esq. of Herefordshire. Dr. J. .  
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the blooming excellence of Mr. Theophilus Cibber, which Mr. Savage could not in the latter part of his life see his friends about to read without snatching the play out of their hands. The generosity of Mr. Hill did not end on this occasion; for afterwards, when Mr. Savage's necessities returned, he encouraged a subscription to a Miscellany of Poems in a very extraordinary manner, by publishing his story in the *Plain Dealer*\*, with some affecting lines, which he asserts to have been written by Mr. Savage upon the treatment received by him from his mother, but of which he was himself the author, as Mr. Savage afterwards declared. These lines, and the paper in which they were inserted, had a very powerful effect upon all but his mother, whom, by making her cruelty more public, they only hardened in her aversion.

Mr. Hill not only promoted the subscription to the Miscellany, but furnished likewise the

\* The *Plain Dealer* was a periodical paper, written by Mr. Hill and Mr. Bond, whom Mr. Savage called the two contending powers of light and darkness. They wrote by turns each six Essays; and the character of the work was observed regularly to rise in Mr. Hill's weeks, and fall in Mr. Bond's. Dr. J.

greatest part of the Poems of which it is composed, and particularly *The Happy Man*, which he published as a specimen.

The subscriptions of those whom these papers should influence to patronize merit in distress, without any other sollicitation, were directed to be left at Button's coffee-house, and Mr. Savage going thither a few days afterwards, without expectation of any effect from his proposal, found to his surprise seventy guineas \*, which had been sent him in consequence of the compassion excited by Mr. Hill's pathetic representation.

To this Miscellany he wrote a Preface, in which he gives an account of his mother's cruelty in a very uncommon strain of humour, and with a gaiety of imagination, which the success of his subscription probably produced.

\* The names of those who so generously contributed to his relief, having been mentioned in a former account, ought not to be omitted here. They were the Duchess of Cleveland, Lady Cheyney, Lady Castleman, Lady Gower, Lady Lechmere, the Duchess Dowager and Duchess of Rutland, Lady Strafford, the Countess Dowager of Warwick, Mrs. Mary Floyer, Mrs. Sophia Noel, Duke of Rutland, Lord Gainsborough, Lord Minkington, Mr. John Savage. Dr. J.

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The Dedication is addressed to the Lady Mary Wortley Montague, whom he flatters without reserve, and, to confess the truth, with very little art\*. The same observation may be extended to all his Dedications: his compliments are constrained and violent, heaped together without the grace of order, or the decency of introduction: he seems to have written his panegyrics for the perusal only of his patrons, and to imagine that he had no other task than to pamper them with praises however gross, and that flattery would make its way to

\* This the following extract from it will prove :

—" Since our country has been honoured with the glory of your  
 " wit, as elevated and immortal as your soul, it no longer re-  
 " mains a doubt whether your sex have strength of mind in pro-  
 " portion to their sweetness. There is something in your verses  
 " as distinguished as your air.—They are as strong as truth, as  
 " deep as reason, as clear as innocence, and as smooth as beauty.  
 " —They contain a nameless and peculiar mixture of force and  
 " grace, which is at once so movingly serene, and so majesti-  
 " cally lovely, that it is too amiable to appear any where but in  
 " your eyes and in your writings.

" As fortune is not more my enemy than I am the enemy of  
 " of flattery, I know not how I can forbear this application to  
 " your Ladyship, because there is scarce a possibility that I should  
 " say more than I believe, when I am speaking of your Excel-  
 " lence." Dr. J.

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the heart, without the assistance of elegance or invention.

Soon afterwards, the death of the king furnished a general subject for a poetical contest, in which Mr. Savage engaged, and is allowed to have carried the prize of honour from his competitors: but I know not whether he gained by his performance any other advantage than the increase of his reputation; though it must certainly have been with farther views that he prevailed upon himself to attempt a species of writing, of which all the topics had been long before exhausted, and which was made at once difficult by the multitudes that had failed in it; and those that had succeeded.

He was now advancing in reputation, and though frequently involved in very distressful perplexities, appeared however to be gaining upon mankind, when both his fame and his life were endangered by an event, of which it is not yet determined, whether it ought to be mentioned as a crime or a calamity.

On the 20th of November, 1727, Mr. Savage came from Richmond, where he then lodged, that he might pursue his studies without interruption; with an intent to discharge  
another

another lodging which he had in Westminster; and accidentally meeting two gentlemen his acquaintances, whose names were Merchant and Gregory, he went in with them to a neighbouring coffee-house, and sat drinking till it was late, it being in no time of Mr. Savage's life any part of his character to be the first of the company that desired to separate. He would willingly have gone to bed in the same house, but there was not room for the whole company, and therefore they agreed to ramble about the streets, and divert themselves with such amusements as should offer themselves till morning.

In this walk they happened unluckily to discover a light in Robinson's coffee-house, near Charing-cross, and therefore went in. Merchant with some rudeness demanded a room, and was told that there was a good fire in the next parlour, which the company were about to leave, being then paying their reckoning. Merchant, not satisfied with this answer, rushed into the room, and was followed by his companions. He then petulantly placed himself between the company and the fire, and soon after kicked down the table. This produced a quarrel,

quarrel, swords were drawn on both sides, and one Mr. James Sinclair was killed. Savage, having likewise wounded a maid that held him, forced his way with Merchant out of the house; but being intimidated and confused, without resolution either to fly or stay, they were taken in a back-court by one of the company and some soldiers whom he had called to his assistance.

Being secured and guarded that night, they were in the morning carried before three justices, who committed them to the Gatehouse, from whence, upon the death of Mr. Sinclair, which happened in the same day, they were removed in the night to Newgate, where they were however treated with some distinction, exempted from the ignominy of chains, and confined, not among the common criminals, but in the Prefs-yard.

When the day of trial came, the court was crowded in a very unusual manner, and the public appeared to interest itself as in a cause of general concern. The witnesses against Mr. Savage and his friends were, the woman who kept the house, which was a house of ill fame, and her maid, the men who were in the room  
with

with Mr. Sinclair, and a woman of the town; who had been drinking with them, and with whom one of them had been seen in bed. They swore in general, that Merchant gave the provocation, which Savage and Gregory drew their swords to justify; that Savage drew first, and that he stabbed Sinclair when he was not in a posture of defence, or while Gregory commanded his sword; that after he had given the thrust he turned pale, and would have retired, but the maid clung round him, and one of the company endeavoured to detain him, from whom he broke, by cutting the maid on the head, but was afterwards taken in a court.

There was some difference in their deposition; one did not see Savage give the wound, another saw it given when Sinclair held his point towards the ground; and the woman of the town asserted, that she did not see Sinclair's sword at all: this difference however was very far from amounting to inconsistency; but it was sufficient to shew, that the hurry of the dispute was such, that it was not easy to discover the truth with relation to particular circumstances, and that therefore some deductions were to be made from the credibility of the testimonies.

Sinclair



Sinclair had declared several times before his death, that he received his wound from Savage: nor did Savage at his trial deny the fact, but endeavoured partly to extenuate it, by urging the suddenness of the whole action, and the impossibility of an ill design, or premeditated malice, and partly to justify it by the necessity of self-defence, and the hazard of his own life, if he had lost that opportunity of giving the thrust: he observed, that neither reason nor law obliged a man to wait for the blow which was threatened, and which, if he should suffer it, he might never be able to return, that it was always allowable to prevent an assault, and to preserve life by taking away that of the adversary, by whom it was endangered.

With regard to the violence with which he endeavoured to escape, he declared, that it was not his design to fly from justice or decline a trial, but to avoid the expences and severities of a prison; and that he intended to have appeared at the bar without compulsion.

This defence, which took up more than an hour, was heard by the multitude that thronged the court with the most attentive and respectful silence: those who thought he ought not to be

acquitted, owned that applause could not be refused him, and those who before pitied his misfortunes; now revered his abilities.

The witnesses which appeared against him were proved to be persons of characters which did not entitle them to much credit; a common strumpet, a woman by whom strumpets were entertained, and a man by whom they were supported, and the character of Savage was by several persons of distinction asserted to be that of a modest inoffensive man, not inclined to broils or to insolence, and who had, to that time, been only known for his misfortunes and his wit.

Had his audience been his judges, he had undoubtedly been acquitted, but Mr Page, who was then upon the bench, treated him with his usual insolence and severity, and when he had summed up the evidence, endeavoured to exasperate the jury, as Mr. Savage used to relate it, with this eloquent harangue:

‘ Gentlemen of the jury, you are to consider  
‘ that Mr. Savage is a very great man, a much  
‘ greater man than you or I, gentlemen of the  
‘ jury; that he wears very fine clothes, much  
‘ finer clothes than you or I, gentlemen of the  
jury

‘ jury ; that he has abundance of money in his  
 ‘ pocket, much more money than you or I,  
 ‘ gentlemen of the jury ; but, gentlemen of  
 ‘ the jury, is it not a very hard case, gentlemen  
 ‘ of the jury, that Mr. Savage should therefore  
 ‘ kill you or me, gentlemen of the jury ?’

Mr. Savage, hearing his defence thus misrepresented, and the men who were to decide his fate incited against him by invidious comparisons, resolutely asserted, that his cause was not candidly explained, and began to recapitulate what he had before said with regard to his condition, and the necessity of endeavouring to escape the expences of imprisonment ; but the judge having ordered him to be silent, and repeated his orders without effect, commanded that he should be taken from the bar by force.

The jury then heard the opinion of the judge, that good characters were of no weight against positive evidence, though they might turn the scale where it was doubtful ; and that though, when two men attack each other, the death of either is only manslaughter ; but where one is the aggressor, as in the case before them, and, in pursuance of his first attack kills the other, the law supposes the action, however sudden,

fudden, to be malicious. They then deliberated upon their verdict, and determined that Mr. Savage and Mr. Gregory were guilty of murder, and Mr. Merchant, who had no sword, only of manslaughter.

Thus ended this memorable trial, which lasted eight hours. Mr. Savage and Mr. Gregory were conducted back to prison, where they were more closely confined, and loaded with irons of fifty pounds weight: four days afterwards they were sent back to the court to receive sentence, on which occasion Mr. Savage made, as far as it could be retained in memory, the following speech:

“ It is now, my Lord, too late to offer any  
“ thing by way of defence or vindication, nor  
“ can we expect from your Lordships, in this  
“ court, but the sentence which the law re-  
“ quires you, as judges, to pronounce against  
“ men of our calamitous condition.—But we  
“ are also persuaded, that as mere men, and out  
“ of this feat of rigorous justice, you are sus-  
“ ceptive of the tender passions, and too hu-  
“ mane not to commiserate the unhappy situa-  
“ tion of those, whom the law sometimes per-  
“ haps—exacts—from you to pronounce upon.

“ No

“ No doubt you distinguish between offences  
 “ which arise out of premeditation, and a dis-  
 “ position habituated to vice or immorality,  
 “ and transgressions which are the unhappy  
 “ and unforeseen effects of casual absence of  
 “ reason, and sudden impulse of passion : we  
 “ therefore hope you will contribute all you can  
 “ to an extension of that mercy, which the gen-  
 “ tlemen of the jury have been pleased to shew  
 “ Mr. Merchant, who (allowing facts as sworn  
 “ against us by the evidence) has led us into  
 “ this our calamity. I hope this will not be  
 “ as if we meant to reflect upon that gentleman,  
 “ or remove any thing from us upon him, or  
 “ that we repine the more at our fate, because  
 “ he has no participation of it : No, my Lord !  
 “ For my part, I declare nothing could more  
 “ soften my grief, than to be without any com-  
 “ panion in so great a misfortune \*.”

Mr. Savage had now no hopes of life, but  
 from the mercy of the crown, which was very  
 earnestly solicited by his friends, and which,  
 with whatever difficulty the story may obtain  
 belief, was obstructed only by his mother.

\* Mr. Savage's Life.

To prejudice the Queen against him, she made use of an incident, which was omitted in the order of time, that it might be mentioned together with the purpose which it was made to serve. Mr. Savage, when he had discovered his birth, had an incessant desire to speak to his mother, who always avoided him in publick, and refused him admision into her house. One evening walking, as it was his custom, in the street that she inhabited, he saw the door of her house by accident open, he entered it, and, finding no person in the passage to hinder him, went up stairs to salute her. She discovered him before he entered her chamber, alarmed the family with the most distressful outcries, and when she had by her screams gathered them about her, ordered them to drive out of the house that villain, who had forced himself in upon her, and endeavoured to murder her. Savage, who had attempted with the most submissive tenderness to soften her rage, hearing her utter so detestable an accusation, thought it prudent to retire; and, I believe, never attempted afterwards to speak to her.

But, shocked as he was with her falsehood and her cruelty, he imagined that she intended

no other use of her lye, than to set herself free from his embraces and solicitations, and was very far from suspecting that she would treasure it in her memory, as an instrument of future wickedness, or that she would endeavour for this fictitious assault to deprive him of his life.

But when the Queen was solicited for his pardon, and informed of the severe treatment which he had suffered from his judge, she answered, that, however unjustifiable might be the manner of his trial, or whatever extenuation the action for which he was condemned might admit, she could not think that man a proper object of the King's mercy, who had been capable of entering his mother's house in the night, with an intent to murder her.

By whom this atrocious calumny had been transmitted to the Queen, whether she that invented had the front to relate it, whether she found any one weak enough to credit it, or corrupt enough to concur with her in her hateful design, I know not: but methods had been taken to persuade the Queen so strongly of the truth of it, that she for a long time refused to hear any one of those who petitioned for his life.

Thus had Savage perished by the evidence of a hawd, a strumpet, and his mother, had not justice and compassion procured him an advocate of rank too great to be rejected unheard, and of virtue too eminent to be heard without being believed. His merit and his calamities happened to reach the ear of the Countess of Hertford, who engaged in his support with all the tenderness that is excited by pity, and all the zeal which is kindled by generosity; and, demanding an audience of the Queen, laid before her the whole series of his mother's cruelty, exposed the improbability of an accusation by which he was charged with an intent to commit a murder that could produce no advantage, and soon convinced her how little his former conduct could deserve to be mentioned as a reason for extraordinary severity.

The interposition of this Lady was so successful, that he was soon after admitted to bail, and, on the 9th of March, 1728, pleaded the King's pardon.

It is natural to enquire upon what motives his mother could persecute him in a manner so outrageous and implacable; for what reason she could employ all the arts of malice, and all  
the



the snares of calumny, to take away the life of her own son, of a son who never injured her, who was never supported by her expence, nor obstructed any prospect of pleasure or advantage : why she should endeavour to destroy him by a lye—a lye which could not gain credit, but must vanish of itself at the first moment of examination, and of which only this can be said to make it probable, that it may be observed from her conduct, that the most execrable crimes are sometimes committed without apparent temptation.

This mother is still alive \*, and may perhaps even yet, though her malice was so often defeated, enjoy the pleasure of reflecting, that the life, which she often endeavoured to destroy, was at last shortened by her maternal offices, that though she could not transport her son to the plantations, bury him in the shop of a mechanic, or hasten the hand of the public executioner, she has yet had the satisfaction of imbittering all his hours, and forcing him into exigences that hurried on his death.

\* She died Oct. 11, 1753, at her house in Old Bond Street, aged above fourscore. E.

It is by no means necessary to aggravate the enormity of this woman's conduct, by placing it in opposition to that of the Countess of Hertford, no one can fail to observe how much more amiable it is to relieve than to oppress, and to rescue innocence from destruction, than to destroy without an injury.

Mr. Savage, during his imprisonment, his trial, and the time in which he lay under sentence of death, behaved with great firmness and equality of mind, and confirmed by his fortitude the esteem of those who before admired him for his abilities \*. The peculiar circumstances of his life were made more generally known by a short account †, which was then published, and of which several thou-

\* It appears that during his confinement he wrote a letter to his mother, which he sent to Theophilus Cibber, that it might be transmitted to her through the means of Mr. Wilks. In his Letter to Cibber he says—"as to death, I am easy, and dare meet it like a man—all that touches me is the concern of my friends, and a reconciliation with my mother—I cannot express the agony I felt when I wrote the Letter to her—if you can find any decent excuse for shewing it to Mrs Oldfield, do; for I would have all my friends (and that admirable lady in particular) be satisfied I have done my duty towards it—Dr. Young to-day sent me a letter, most passionately kind. E.

† Written by Mr. Beckingham and another gentleman. Dr. J. sands

fands were in a few weeks difperfed over the nation: and the compaffion of mankind operated fo powerfully in his favour, that he was enabled by frequent prefents, not only to fupport himfelf, but to affift Mr. Gregory in prifon; and when he was pardoned and releafed, he found the number of his friends not leffened.

The nature of the aft for which he had been tried was in itfelf doubtful; of the evidences which appeared againft him, the character of the man was not unexceptionable, that of the women notoriously infamous; ſhe, whofe testimony chiefly influenced the jury to condemn him, afterwards retracted her assertions. He always himfelf denied that he was drunk, as had been generally reported. Mr. Gregory, who is now (1744) Collector of Antigua, is faid to declare him far lefs criminal than he was imagined, even by ſome who favoured him, and Page himfelf afterwards confeffed, that he had treated him with uncommon rigour. When all thefe particulars are rated together, perhaps the memory of Savage may not be much ſullied by his trial.

Some time after he obtained his liberty, he  
met

met in the street the woman that had sworn with so much malignity against him. She informed him, that she was in distress, and, with a degree of confidence not easily attainable, desired him to relieve her. He, instead of insulting her misery, and taking pleasure in the calamities of one who had brought his life into danger, reproved her gently for her perjury; and changing the only guinea that he had, divided it equally between her and himself.

This is an action which in some ages would have made a saint, and perhaps in others a hero, and which, without any hyperbolical encomiums, must be allowed to be an instance of uncommon generosity, an act of complicated virtue; by which he at once relieved the poor, corrected the vicious, and forgave an enemy; by which he at once remitted the strongest provocations, and exercised the most ardent charity.

Compassion was indeed the distinguishing quality of Savage; he never appeared inclined to take advantage of weakness, to attack the defenceless, or to press upon the falling: whoever was distressed was certain at least of his  
good

good wishes ; and when he could give no assistance to extricate them from misfortunes, he endeavoured to sooth them by sympathy and tenderness.

But when his heart was not softened by the sight of misery, he was sometimes obstinate in his resentment, and did not quickly lose the remembrance of an injury. He always continued to speak with anger of the insolence and partiality of Page, and a short time before his death revenged it by a satire\*.

It is natural to enquire in what terms Mr. Savage spoke of this fatal action, when the danger was over, and he was under no necessity of using any art to set his conduct in the fairest light. He was not willing to dwell upon it ; and, if he transiently mentioned it, appeared neither to consider himself as a murderer, nor as a man wholly free from the guilt of blood†. How much and how long he regretted it, appeared in a poem which he published many years afterwards. On occasion of a copy of verses, in which the failings of good

\* Printed in the present collection.

† In one of his letters he styles it "a fatal quarrel, but too well known." Dr. J.

men were recounted, and in which the author had endeavoured to illustrate his position, that "the best may sometimes deviate from virtue," by an instance of murder committed by Savage in the heat of wine, Savage remarked, that it was no very just representation of a good man, to suppose him liable to drunkenness, and disposed in his riots to cut throats.

He was now indeed at liberty, but was, as before, without any other support than accidental favours and uncertain patronage afforded him; sources by which he was sometimes very liberally supplied, and which at other times were suddenly stopped, so that he spent his life between want and plenty; or, what was yet worse, between beggary and extravagance; for as whatever he received was the gift of chance, which might as well favour him at one time as another, he was tempted to squander what he had, because he always hoped to be immediately supplied.

Another cause of his profusion was the absurd kindness of his friends, who at once rewarded and enjoyed his abilities, by treating him at taverns, and habituating him to pleasures which he could not afford to enjoy, and  
which

which he was not able to deny himself, though he purchased the luxury of a single night by the anguish of cold and hunger for a week.

The experience of these inconveniences determined him to endeavour after some settled income, which, having long found submission and intreaties fruitless, he attempted to extort from his mother by rougher methods. He had now, as he acknowledged, lost that tenderness for her, which the whole series of her cruelty had not been able wholly to repress, till he found, by the efforts which she made for his destruction, that she was not content with refusing to assist him, and being neutral in his struggles with poverty, but was as ready to snatch every opportunity of adding to his misfortunes, and that she was now to be considered as an enemy implacably malicious, whom nothing but his blood could satisfy. He therefore threatened to harass her with lampoons, and to publish a copious narrative of her conduct, unless she consented to purchase an exemption from infamy, by allowing him a pension.

This expedient proved successful. Whether shame still survived, though virtue was extinct,  
or

or whether her relations had more delicacy than herself, and imagined that some of the darts which satire might point at her would glance upon them, Lord Tyrconnel, whatever were his motives, upon his promise to lay aside his design of exposing the cruelty of his mother, received him into his family, treated him as his equal, and engaged to allow him a pension of two hundred pounds a year.

This was the golden part of Mr. Savage's life, and for some time he had no reason to complain of fortune; his appearance was splendid, his expences large, and his acquaintance extensive. He was courted by all who endeavoured to be thought men of genius, and careased by all who valued themselves upon a refined taste. To admire Mr. Savage, was a proof of discernment, and to be acquainted with him, was a title to poetical reputation. His presence was sufficient to make any place of publick entertainment popular, and his approbation and example constituted the fashion. So powerful is genius, when it is invested with the glitter of affluence! Men willingly pay to fortune that regard which they owe to merit, and are pleased when they have an opportunity  
at



at once of gratifying their vanity, and practising their duty.

This interval of prosperity furnished him with opportunities of enlarging his knowledge of human nature, by contemplating life from its highest gradations to its lowest, and, had he afterwards applied to dramatick poetry, he would perhaps not have had many superiors; for as he never suffered any scene to pass before his eyes without notice, he had treasured in his mind all the different combinations of passions, and the innumerable mixtures of vice and virtue, which distinguish one character from another, and as his conception was strong, his expressions were clear, he easily received impressions from objects, and very forcibly transmitted them to others.

Of his exact observations on human life he has left a proof, which would do honour to the greatest names, in a small pamphlet, called, *The Author to be let* \*, where he introduces Iscariot Hackney, a prostitute scribbler, giving an account of his birth, his education, his disposition and morals, habits of life, and maxims of

\* Printed in his Works, vol. II. p. 231.

conduct. In the introduction are related many secret histories of the petty writers of that time, but sometimes mixed with ungenerous reflections on their birth, their circumstances, or those of their relations, nor can it be denied, that some passages are such as Iscariot Hackney might himself have produced.

He was accused likewise of living in an appearance of friendship with some whom he satirised, and of making use of the confidence which he gained by a seeming kindness to discover failings and expose them: it must be confessed, that Mr. Savage's esteem was no very certain possession, and that he would lampoon at one time those whom he had praised at another.

It may be alledged, that the same man may change his principles; and that he, who was once deservedly commended, may be afterwards satirised with equal justice, or that the poet was dazzled with the appearance of virtue, and found the man whom he had celebrated, when he had an opportunity of examining him more narrowly, unworthy of the panegyrick which he had too hastily bestowed; and that, as a false satire ought to be recanted, for the sake  
of

of him whose reputation may be injured, false praise ought likewise to be obviated, lest the distinction between vice and virtue should be lost, lest a bad man should be trusted upon the credit of his encomiast, or lest others should endeavour to obtain the like praises by the same means.

But though these excuses may be often plausible, and sometimes just, they are very seldom satisfactory to mankind; and the writer, who is not constant to his subject, quickly sinks into contempt, his satire loses its force, and his panegyrick its value, and he is only considered at one time as a flatterer, and as a calumniator at another.

To avoid these imputations, it is only necessary to follow the rules of virtue, and to preserve an unvaried regard to truth. For though it is undoubtedly possible that a man, however cautious, may be sometimes deceived by an artful appearance of virtue, or by false evidences of guilt, such errors will not be frequent; and it will be allowed, that the name of an author would never have been made contemptible, had no man ever said what he did

not think, or misled others but when he was himself deceived.

*The Author to be let* was first published in a single pamphlet, and afterwards inserted in a collection of pieces relating to the Dunciad, which were addressed by Mr. Savage to the Earl of Middlesex, in a \* dedication which he was prevailed upon to sign, though he did not write it, and in which there are some positions, that the true author would perhaps not have published under his own name, and on which Mr. Savage afterwards reflected with no great satisfaction; the enumeration of the bad effects of the uncontrouled freedom of the press, and the assertion that the "liberties taken by the "writers of Journals with their superiors were "exorbitant and unjustifiable," very ill became men, who have themselves not always shewn the exactest regard to the laws of subordination in their writings, and who have often satirised those that at least thought themselves their superiors, as they were eminent for their hereditary rank, and employed in the highest offices of the kingdom. But this is only an

\* See his Works, vol. II. p. 233.

instance of that partiality which almost every man indulges with regard to himself: the liberty of the press is a blessing when we are inclined to write against others, and a calamity when we find ourselves overborne by the multitude of our assailants; as the power of the crown is always thought too great by those who suffer by its influence, and too little by those in whose favour it is exerted; and a standing army is generally accounted necessary by those who command, and dangerous and oppressive by those who support it.

Mr. Savage was likewise very far from believing, that the letters annexed to each species of bad poets in the Bathos were, as he was directed to assert, "set down at random;" for when he was charged by one of his friends with putting his name to such an improbability, he had no other answer to make, than that "he did not think of it," and his friend had too much tenderness to reply, that next to the crime of writing contrary to what he thought, was that of writing without thinking.

After having remarked what is false in this dedication, it is proper that I observe the impartiality which I recommend, by declaring

what Savage asserted, that the account of the circumstances which attended the publication of the Dunciad, however strange and improbable, was exactly true.

The publication of this piece at this time raised Mr. Savage a great number of enemies among those that were attacked by Mr. Pope, with whom he was considered as a kind of confederate, and whom he was suspected of supplying with private intelligence and secret incidents : so that the ignominy of an informer was added to the terror of a satirist.

That he was not altogether free from literary hypocrisy, and that he sometimes spoke one thing, and wrote another, cannot be denied, because he himself confessed, that, when he lived in great familiarity with Dennis, he wrote an epigram \* against him.

\* This epigram was, I believe, never published.

“ Should Dennis publish you had stabb’d your brother,  
Lampoon’d your monarch, or debauch’d your mother;  
Say, what revenge on Dennis can be had,  
Too dull for laughter, for reply too mad?  
On one so poor you cannot take the law,  
On one so old your sword you scorn to draw.  
Uncag’d, then let the harmless monster rage,  
Secure in dulness, madness, want, and age.”

Dr. J.

Mr.

Mr. Savage however set all the malice of all the pigmy writers at defiance, and thought the friendship of Mr. Pope cheaply purchased by being exposed to their censure and their hatred; nor had he any reason to repent of the preference, for he found Mr. Pope a steady and unalienable friend almost to the end of his life.

About this time, notwithstanding his avowed neutrality with regard to party, he published a panegyrick on Sir Robert Walpole, for which he was rewarded by him with twenty guineas, a sum not very large, if either the excellence of the performance, or the affluence of the patron, be considered, but greater than he afterwards obtained from a person of yet higher rank, and more desirous in appearance of being distinguished as a patron of literature.

As he was very far from approving the conduct of Sir Robert Walpole, and in conversation mentioned him sometimes with acrimony, and generally with contempt; as he was one of those who were always zealous in their assertions of the justice of the late opposition, jealous of the rights of the people, and alarmed by the long-continued triumph of the court; it was natural to ask him what could induce

him to employ his poetry in praise of that man who was, in his opinion, an enemy to liberty, and an oppressor of his country? He alledged, that he was then dependent upon the Lord Tyrconnel, who was an implicit follower of the ministry; and that being enjoined by him, not without menaces, to write in praise of his leader, he had not resolution sufficient to sacrifice the pleasure of affluence to that of integrity.

On this, and on many occasions, he was ready to lament the misery of living at the tables of other men, which was his fate from the beginning to the end of his life; for I know not whether he ever had, for three months together, a settled habitation, in which he could claim a right of residence.

To this unhappy state it is just to impute much of the inconstancy of his conduct; for though a readiness to comply with the inclination of others was no part of his natural character, yet he was sometimes obliged to relax his obstinacy, and submit his own judgement, and even his virtue, to the government of those by whom he was supported: so that, if his miseries were sometimes the consequences of his faults,



faults, he ought not yet to be wholly excluded from compassion, because his faults were very often the effects of his misfortunes.

In this gay period \* of his life, while he was surrounded by affluence and pleasure, he published *The Wanderer*, a moral poem, of which the design is comprised in these lines :

I fly all public care, all venal strife,  
To try the still compar'd with active life ;  
To prove, by these, the sons of men may owe  
The fruits of bliss to bursting clouds of woe ;  
That ev'n calamity, by thought refin'd,  
Inspirits and adorns the thinking mind.

And more distinctly in the following passage :

By woe, the soul to daring action swells ;  
By woe, in plaintless patience it excels ;  
From patience prudent, clear experience springs,  
And traces knowledge through the course of  
things !  
Thence hope is form'd, thence fortitude, success,  
Renown :—whate'er men covet and care for.

This performance was always considered by himself as his master-piece ; and Mr. Pope,

when he asked his opinion of it, told him, that he read it once over, and was not displeased with it, that it gave him more pleasure at the second perusal, and delighted him still more at the third.

It has been generally objected to *The Wanderer*, that the disposition of the parts is irregular, that the design is obscure, and the plan perplexed; that the images, however beautiful, succeed each other without order; and that the whole performance is not so much a regular fabrick, as a heap of shining materials thrown together by accident, which strikes rather with the solemn magnificence of a stupendous ruin, than the elegant grandeur of a finished pile.

This criticism is universal, and therefore it is reasonable to believe it at least in a great degree just, but Mr. Savage was always of a contrary opinion, and thought his drift could only be missed by negligence or stupidity, and that the whole plan was regular, and the parts distinct.

It was never denied to abound with strong representations of nature, and just observations upon life; and it may easily be observed, that most of his pictures have an evident tendency to

to illustrate his first great position, "that good  
 "is the consequence of evil." The sun that  
 burns up the mountains, fructifies the vales;  
 the deluge that rushes down the broken rocks  
 with dreadful impetuosity, is separated into  
 purling brooks; and the rage of the hurricane  
 purifies the air.

Even in this poem he has not been able to  
 forbear one touch upon the cruelty of his mo-  
 ther, which, though remarkably delicate and  
 tender, is a proof how deep an impression it  
 had upon his mind.

This must be at least acknowledged, which  
 ought to be thought equivalent to many other  
 excellences, that this poem can promote no  
 other purposes than those of virtue, and that  
 it is written with a very strong sense of the ef-  
 ficacy of religion.

But my province is rather to give the history  
 of Mr. Savage's performances, than to display  
 their beauties, or to obviate the criticisms which  
 they have occasioned; and therefore I shall not  
 dwell upon the particular passages which de-  
 serve applause: I shall neither shew the excel-  
 lence of his descriptions, nor expatiate on the  
 terrifick portrait of suicide, nor point out the  
 artful

artful touches, by which he has distinguished the intellectual features of the rebels, who suffer death in his last canto. It is, however, proper to observe, that Mr. Savage always declared the characters wholly fictitious, and without the least allusion to any real persons or actions.

From a poem so diligently laboured, and so successfully finished, it might be reasonably expected that he should have gained considerable advantage, nor can it, without some degree of indignation and concern, be told, that he sold the copy for ten guineas, of which he afterwards returned two, that the two last sheets of the work might be reprinted, of which he had in his absence intrusted the correction to a friend, who was too indolent to perform it with accuracy.

A superstitious regard to the correction of his sheets was one of Mr. Savage's peculiarities: he often altered, revised, recurred to his first reading or punctuation, and again adopted the alteration; he was dubious and irresolute without end, as on a question of the last importance, and at last was seldom satisfied: the intrusion or omission of a comma was sufficient

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to discompose him, and he would lament an error of a single letter as a heavy calamity. In one of his letters relating to an impression of some verses, he remarks, that he had, with regard to the correction of the proof, "a spell upon him," and indeed the anxiety with which he dwelt upon the minutest and most trifling niceties, deserved no other name than that of fascination.

That he sold so valuable a performance for so small a price, was not to be imputed either to necessity, by which the learned and ingenious are often obliged to submit to very hard conditions, or to avarice, by which the booksellers are frequently incited to oppress that genius by which they are supported, but to that ~~immoderate~~ immoderate desire of pleasure, and habitual slavery to his passions, which involved him in many perplexities. He happened at that time to be engaged in the pursuit of some trifling gratification, and, being without money for the present occasion, sold his poem to the first bidder, and perhaps for the first price that was proposed, and would probably have been content with less, if less had been offered him.

This

This poem was addressed to the Lord Tyrconnel, not only in the first lines, but in a formal dedication filled with the highest strains of panegyrick, and the warmest professions of gratitude, but by no means remarkable for delicacy of connexion or elegance of style.

These praises in a short time he found himself inclined to retract, being discarded by the man on whom he had bestowed them, and whom he then immediately discovered not to have deserved them. Of this quarrel, which every day made more bitter, Lord Tyrconnel and Mr. Savage assigned very different reasons, which might perhaps all in reality concur, though they were not all convenient to be alleged by either party. Lord Tyrconnel affirmed, that it was the constant practice of Mr. Savage to enter a tavern with any company that proposed it, drink the most expensive wines with great profusion, and when the reckoning was demanded, to be without money: if, as it often happened, his company were willing to defray his part, the affair ended, without any ill consequences; but, if they were refractory, and expected that the wine should be paid for by him that drank it, his method of composition

tion was, to take them with him to his own apartment, assume the government of the house, and order the butler in an imperious manner to set the best wine in the cellar before his company, who often drank till they forgot the respect due to the house in which they were entertained, indulged themselves in the utmost extravagance of merriment, practised the most licentious frolicks, and committed all the outrages of drunkenness.

Nor was this the only charge which Lord Tyrconnel brought against him: Having given him a collection of valuable books, stamped with his own arms, he had the mortification to see them in a short time exposed to sale upon the stalls, it being usual with Mr. Savage, when he wanted a small sum, to take his books to the pawnbroker.

Whoever was acquainted with Mr. Savage easily credited both these accusations: for, having been obliged, from his first entrance into the world, to subsist upon expedients, affluence was not able to exalt him above them; and so much was he delighted with wine and conversation, and so long had he been accustomed to live by chance, that he would at any time go  
to

to the tavern without scruple, and trust for the reckoning to the liberality of his company, and frequently of company to whom he was very little known. This conduct indeed very seldom drew upon him those inconveniences that might be feared by any other person, for his conversation was so entertaining, and his address so pleasing, that few thought the pleasure which they received from him dearly purchased, by paying for his wine. It was his peculiar happiness, that he scarcely ever found a stranger, whom he did not leave a friend; but it must likewise be added, that he had not often a friend long, without obliging him to become a stranger.

Mr. Savage, on the other hand, declared, that Lord Tyrconnel\* quarrelled with him, because he would not subtract from his own luxury and extravagance what he had promised to allow him, and that his resentment was only a plea for the violation of his promise: He asserted, that he had done nothing that ought to exclude him from that subsistence which he

\* His expression in one of his letters was, "that Lord Tyrconnel had involved his estate, and therefore poorly fought an occasion to quarrel with him."

Dr. J.



thought not so much a favour, as a debt, since it was offered him upon conditions which he had never broken, and that his only fault was, that he could not be supported with nothing.

He acknowledged, that Lord Tyrconnel often exhorted him to regulate his method of life, and not to spend all his nights in taverns, and that he appeared desirous that he would pass those hours with him, which he so freely bestowed upon others. This demand Mr. Savage considered as a censure of his conduct, which he could never patiently bear, and which, in the latter and cooler parts of his life, was so offensive to him, that he declared it as his resolution, "to spurn that friend who should presume to dictate to him," and it is not likely, that in his earlier years he received admonitions with more calmness.

He was likewise inclined to resent such expectations, as tending to infringe his liberty, of which he was very jealous, when it was necessary to the gratification of his passions; and declared, that the request was still more unreasonable, as the company to which he was to have been confined was insupportably

disagreeable. This assertion affords another instance of that inconsistency of his writings with his conversation, which was so often to be observed. He forgot how lavishly he had, in his Dedication to *The Wanderer*, extolled the delicacy and penetration, the humanity and generosity, the candour and politeness of the man, whom, when he no longer loved him, he declared to be a wretch without understanding, without good-nature, and without justice; of whose name he thought himself obliged to leave no trace in any future edition of his writings; and accordingly blotted it out of that copy of *The Wanderer* which was in his hands.

During his continuance with the Lord Tyrconnel, he wrote *The Triumph of Health and Mirth*, on the recovery of Lady Tyrconnel from a languishing illness. This performance is remarkable, not only for the gaiety of the ideas, and the melody of the numbers, but for the agreeable fiction upon which it is formed. Mirth, overwhelmed with sorrow for the sickness of her favourite, takes a flight in quest of her sister Health, whom she finds reclined upon the brow of a lofty mountain, amidst

amidst the fragrance of perpetual spring, with the breezes of the morning sporting about her. Being solicited by her sister Mirth, she readily promises her assistance, flies away in a cloud, and impregnates the waters of Bath with new virtues, by which the sickness of Belinda is relieved.

As the reputation of his abilities, the particular circumstances of his birth and life, the splendour of his appearance, and the distinction which was for some time paid him by Lord Tyrconnel, intitled him to familiarity with persons of higher rank than those to whose conversation he had been before admitted; he did not fail to gratify that curiosity, which induced him to take a nearer view of those whom their birth, their employments, or their fortunes, necessarily place at a distance from the greatest part of mankind, and to examine whether their merit was magnified or diminished by the medium through which it was contemplated, whether the splendour with which they dazzled their admirers was inherent in themselves, or only reflected on them by the objects that surrounded them; and whether

great men were selected for high stations, or high stations made great men.

For this purpose he took all opportunities of conversing familiarly with those who were most conspicuous at that time for their power or their influence ; he watched their looser moments, and examined their domestick behaviour, with that acuteness which nature had given him, and which the uncommon variety of his life had contributed to increase, and that inquisitiveness which must always be produced in a vigorous mind, by an absolute freedom from all pressing or domestick engagements.

His discernment was quick, and therefore he soon found in every person, and in every affair, something that deserved attention , he was supported by others, without any care for himself, and was therefore at leisure to pursue his observations.

More circumstances to constitute a critick on human life could not easily concur ; nor indeed could any man, who assumed from accidental advantages more praise than he could justly claim from his real merit, admit any acquaintance more dangerous than that of Savage, of whom likewise it must be confessed, that abili-

ties really exalted above the common level, or virtue refined from passion, or proof against corruption, could not easily find an abler judge, or a warmer advocate.

What was the result of Mr. Savage's enquiry, though he was not much accustomed to conceal his discoveries, it may not be entirely safe to relate, because the persons whose characters he criticised are powerful, and power and resentment are seldom strangers; nor would it perhaps be wholly just, because what he asserted in conversation might, though true in general, be heightened by some momentary ardour of imagination, and, as it can be delivered only from memory, may be imperfectly represented; so that the picture at first aggravated, and then unskilfully copied, may be justly suspected to retain no great resemblance of the original.

It may however be observed, that he did not appear to have formed very elevated ideas of those to whom the administration of affairs, or the conduct of parties, has been intrusted; who have been considered as the advocates of the crown, or the guardians of the people; and who have obtained the most implicit confidence, and the loudest applauses. Of one

particular person, who has been at one time so popular as to be generally esteemed, and at another so formidable as to be universally detested, he observed, that his acquisitions had been small, or that his capacity was narrow, and that the whole range of his mind was from obscenity to politicks, and from politicks to obscenity.

But the opportunity of indulging his speculations on great characters was now at an end. He was banished from the table of Lord Tyrconnel, and turned again adrift upon the world, without prospect of finding quickly any other harbour. As prudence was not one of the virtues by which he was distinguished, he had made no provision against a misfortune like this. And though it is not to be imagined but that the separation must for some time have been preceded by coldness, peevishness, or neglect, though it was undoubtedly the consequence of accumulated provocations on both sides; yet every one that knew Savage will readily believe, that to him it was sudden as a stroke of thunder; that, though he might have transiently suspected it, he had never suffered any thought so unpleasant to sink into his mind,  
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but that he had driven it away by amusements, or dreams of future felicity and affluence, and had never taken any measures by which he might prevent a precipitation from plenty to indigence.

This quarrel and separation, and the difficulties to which Mr. Savage was exposed by them, were soon known both to his friends and enemies; nor was it long before he perceived, from the behaviour of both, how much is added to the lustre of genius by the ornaments of wealth.

His condition did not appear to excite much compassion, for he had not always been careful to use the advantages he enjoyed with that moderation which ought to have been with more than usual caution preserved by him, who knew, if he had reflected, that he was only a dependant on the bounty of another, whom he could expect to support him no longer than he endeavoured to preserve his favour by complying with his inclinations, and whom he nevertheless set at defiance, and was continually irritating by negligence or encroachments.

Examples need not be sought at any great distance to prove, that superiority of fortune has a natural tendency to kindle pride, and that pride seldom fails to exert itself in contempt and insult, and if this is often the effect of hereditary wealth, and of honours enjoyed only by the merits of others, it is some extenuation of any indecent triumphs to which this unhappy man may have been betrayed, that his prosperity was heightened by the force of novelty, and made more intoxicating by a sense of the misery in which he had so long languished, and perhaps of the insults which he had formerly borne, and which he might now think himself entitled to revenge. It is too common for those who have unjustly suffered pain, to inflict it likewise in their turn with the same injustice, and to imagine that they have a right to treat others as they have themselves been treated.

That Mr. Savage was too much elevated by any good fortune, is generally known; and some passages of his introduction to *The Author to be let* sufficiently shew, that he did not wholly refrain from such satire as he afterwards thought very unjust, when he was exposed to it himself;

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for, when he was afterwards ridiculed in the character of a distressed poet, he very easily discovered, that distress was not a proper subject for merriment, or topick of invective. He was then able to discern, that if misery be the effect of virtue, it ought to be revered; if of ill-fortune, to be pitied, and if of vice, not to be insulted, because it is perhaps itself a punishment adequate to the crime by which it was produced. And the humanity of that man can deserve no panegyrick, who is capable of reproaching a criminal in the hands of the executioner.

But these reflections, though they readily occurred to him in the first and last parts of his life, were, I am afraid, for a long time forgotten; at least they were, like many other maxims, treasured up in his mind, rather for shew than use, and operated very little upon his conduct, however elegantly he might sometimes explain, or however forcibly he might inculcate them.

His degradation therefore from the condition which he had enjoyed with such wanton thoughtlessness, was considered by many as an occasion of triumph. Those who had before  
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paid their court to him without success, soon returned the contempt which they had suffered; and they who had received favours from him, for of such favours as he could bestow he was very liberal, did not always remember them. So much more certain are the effects of resentment than of gratitude: it is not only to many more pleasing to recollect those faults which place others below them, than those virtues by which they are themselves comparatively depressed: but it is likewise more easy to neglect, than to recompense, and though there are few who will practise a laborious virtue, there will never be wanting multitudes that will indulge an easy vice.

Savage, however, was very little disturbed at the marks of contempt which his ill-fortune brought upon him, from those whom he never esteemed, and with whom he never considered himself as levelled by any calamities: and though it was not without some uneasiness that he saw some, whose friendship he valued, change their behaviour; he yet observed their coldness without much emotion, considered them as the slaves of fortune and the wor-  
shippers

ships of prosperity, and was more inclined to despise them, than to lament himself.

It does not appear that, after this return of his wants, he found mankind equally favourable to him, as at his first appearance in the world. His story, though in reality not less melancholy, was less affecting, because it was no longer new, it therefore procured him no new friends, and those that had formerly relieved him, thought they might now consign him to others. He was now likewise considered by many rather as criminal, than as unhappy; for the friends of Lord Tyrconnel, and of his mother, were sufficiently industrious to publish his weaknesses, which were indeed very numerous; and nothing was forgotten, that might make him either hateful or ridiculous.

It cannot but be imagined, that such representations of his faults must make great numbers less sensible of his distress; many, who had only an opportunity to hear one part, made no scruple to propagate the account which they received, many assisted their circulation from malice or revenge, and perhaps many pretended to credit them, that they might with a  
better

better grace withdraw their regard, or withhold their assistance.

Savage, however, was not one of those, who suffered himself to be injured without resistance, nor was less diligent in exposing the faults of Lord Tyrconnel, over whom he obtained at least this advantage, that he drove him first to the practice of outrage and violence, for he was so much provoked by the wit and virulence of Savage, that he came with a number of attendants, that did no honour to his courage, to beat him at a coffee-house. But it happened that he had left the place a few minutes, and his lordship had, without danger, the pleasure of boasting how he would have treated him. Mr. Savage went next day to repay his visit at his own house; but was prevailed on, by his domesticks, to retire without insisting upon seeing him.

Lord Tyrconnel was accused by Mr. Savage of some actions, which scarcely any provocations will be thought sufficient to justify; such as seizing what he had in his lodgings, and other instances of wanton cruelty, by which he increased the distress of Savage, without any advantage to himself.

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These mutual accusations were retorted on both sides, for many years, with the utmost degree of virulence and rage; and time seemed rather to augment than diminish their resentment. That the anger of Mr. Savage should be kept alive, is not strange, because he felt every day the consequences of the quarrel; but it might reasonably have been hoped, that Lord Tyrconnel might have relented, and at length have forgot those provocations, which, however they might have once inflamed him, had not in reality much hurt him.

The spirit of Mr. Savage indeed never suffered him to solicit a reconciliation; he returned reproach for reproach, and insult for insult, his superiority of wit supplied the disadvantages of his fortune, and enabled him to form a party, and prejudice great numbers in his favour.

But though this might be some gratification of his vanity, it afforded very little relief to his necessities, and he was very frequently reduced to uncommon hardships, of which, however, he never made any mean or importunate complaints, being formed rather to bear  
misery

misery with fortitude, than enjoy prosperity with moderation.

He now thought himself again at liberty to expose the cruelty of his mother; and therefore, I believe, about this time, published *The Bastard*, a poem remarkable for the vivacious sallies of thought in the beginning, where he makes a pompous enumeration of the imaginary advantages of base birth; and the pathetic sentiments at the end, where he recounts the real calamities which he suffered by the crime of his parents.

The vigour and spirit of the verses, the peculiar circumstances of the author, the novelty of the subject, and the notoriety of the story to which the allusions are made, procured this performance a very favourable reception; great numbers were immediately dispersed, and editions were multiplied with unusual rapidity.

One circumstance attended the publication, which Savage used to relate with great satisfaction. His mother, to whom the poem was with "due reverence" inscribed, happened then to be at Bath, where she could not conveniently retire from censure, or conceal herself from observation; and no sooner did the reputation  
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of the poem begin to spread, than she heard it repeated in all places of concourse, nor could she enter the assembly-rooms or cross the walks, without being saluted with some lines from *The Bastard*.

This was perhaps the first time that ever she discovered a sense of shame, and on this occasion the power of wit was very conspicuous; the wretch who had, without scruple, proclaimed herself an adultress, and who had first endeavoured to starve her son, then to transport him, and afterwards to hang him, was not able to bear the representation of her own conduct; but fled from reproach, though she felt no pain from guilt, and left Bath with the utmost haste, to shelter herself among the crowds of London.

Thus Savage had the satisfaction of finding, that, though he could not reform his mother, he could punish her, and that he did not always suffer alone.

The pleasure which he received from this increase of his poetical reputation, was sufficient for some time to overbalance the miseries of want, which this performance did not much alleviate; for it was sold for a very tri-  
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vial sum to a bookfeller, who, though the success was so uncommon, that five impressions were sold, of which many were undoubtedly very numerous, had not generosity sufficient to admit the unhappy writer to any part of the profit.

The sale of this poem was always mentioned by Mr. Savage with the utmost elevation of heart, and referred to by him as an incontestable proof of a general acknowledgement of his abilities. It was indeed the only production of which he could justly boast a general reception.

But though he did not lose the opportunity which success gave him, of setting a high rate on his abilities, but paid due deference to the suffrages of mankind when they were given in his favour, he did not suffer his esteem of himself to depend upon others, nor found any thing sacred in the voice of the people when they were inclined to censure him; he then readily shewed the folly of expecting that the public should judge right, observed how slowly poetical merit had often forced its way into the world; he contented himself with the applause of men of judgement, and was somewhat



what disposed to exclude all those from the character of men of judgment who did not applaud him.

But he was at other times more favourable to mankind than to think them blind to the beauties of his works, and imputed the slowness of their sale to other causes; either they were published at a time when the town was empty, or when the attention of the publick was engrossed by some struggle in the parliament, or some other object of general concern; or they were by the neglect of the publisher not diligently dispersed, or by his avarice not advertised with sufficient frequency. Address, or industry, or liberality, was always wanting; and the blame was laid rather on any person than the author.

By arts like these, arts which every man practises in some degree, and to which too much of the little tranquillity of life is to be ascribed, Savage was always able to live at peace with himself. Had he indeed only made use of these expedients to alleviate the loss or want of fortune or reputation, or any other advantages which it is not in man's power to bestow upon himself, they might have been justly men-

tioned as instances of a philosophical mind, and very properly proposed to the imitation of multitudes, who, for want of diverting their imaginations with the same dexterity, languish under afflictions which might be easily removed.

It were doubtless to be wished, that truth and reason were universally prevalent; that every thing were esteemed according to its real value, and that men would secure themselves from being disappointed in their endeavours after happiness, by placing it only in virtue, which is always to be obtained; but if adventitious and foreign pleasures must be pursued, it would be perhaps of some benefit, since that pursuit must frequently be fruitless, if the practice of Savage could be taught, that folly might be an antidote to folly, and one fallacy be obviated by another.

But the danger of this pleasing intoxication must not be concealed, nor indeed can any one, after having observed the life of Savage, need to be cautioned against it. By imputing none of his miseries to himself, he continued to act upon the same principles, and to follow the same path; was never made wiser by his  
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sufferings, nor preserved by one misfortune from falling into another. He proceeded throughout his life to tread the same steps on the same circle, always applauding his past conduct, or at least forgetting it, to amuse himself with phantoms of happiness, which were dancing before him; and willingly turned his eyes from the light of reason, when it would have discovered the illusion, and shewn him, what he never wished to see, his real state.

He is even accused, after having lulled his imagination with those ideal opiates, of having tried the same experiment upon his conscience; and, having accustomed himself to impute all deviations from the right to foreign causes, it is certain that he was upon every occasion too easily reconciled to himself, and that he appeared very little to regret those practices which had impaired his reputation. The reigning error of his life was, that he mistook the love for the practice of virtue, and was indeed not so much a good man, as the friend of goodness.

This at least must be allowed him, that he always preserved a strong sense of the dignity, the beauty, and the necessity of virtue; and that he never contributed deliberately to spread

corruption amongst mankind. His actions, which were generally precipitate, were often blameable, but his writings, being the productions of study, uniformly tended to the exaltation of the mind, and the propagation of morality and piety.

These writings may improve mankind, when his failings shall be forgotten; and therefore he must be considered, upon the whole, as a benefactor to the world; nor can his personal example do any hurt, since, whoever hears of his faults, will hear of the miseries which they brought upon him, and which would deserve less pity, had not his condition been such as made his faults pardonable. He may be considered as a child exposed to all the temptations of indigence, at an age when resolution was not yet strengthened by conviction, nor virtue confirmed by habit, a circumstance which, in his *Bastard*, he laments in a very affecting manner :

— No Mother's care

Shielded my infant innocence with prayer :

No Father's guardian-hand my youth maintain'd,

Call'd forth my virtues, or from vice restrain'd.

*The Bassard*, however it might provoke or mortify his mother, could not be expected to melt her to compassion, so that he was still under the same want of the necessaries of life; and he therefore exerted all the interest which his wit, or his birth, or his misfortunes, could procure, to obtain, upon the death of Eusden, the place of Poet Laureat, and prosecuted his application with so much diligence, that the King publickly declared it his intention to bestow it upon him: but such was the fate of Savage, that even the King, when he intended his advantage, was disappointed in his schemes; for the Lord Chamberlain, who has the disposal of the laurel, as one of the appendages of his office, either did not know the King's design, or did not approve it, or thought the nomination of the Laureat an encroachment upon his rights, and therefore bestowed the laurel upon Colley Cibber.

Mr. Savage, thus disappointed, took a resolution of applying to the queen, that, having once given him life, she would enable him to support it, and therefore published a short poem on her birth-day, to which he gave the

odd title of "Volunteer Laureat." The event of this essay he has himself related in the following letter, which he prefixed to the poem, when he afterwards reprinted it in "The Gentleman's Magazine," from whence I have copied it intire, as this was one of the few attempts in which Mr. Savage succeeded.

À Mr. URBAN,

" In your Magazine for February you published the last ' Volunteer Laureat,' written on a very melancholy occasion, the death of the royal patroness of arts and literature in general, and of the author of that poem in particular, I now send you the first that Mr. Savage wrote under that title.—This gentleman, notwithstanding a very considerable interest, being, on the death of Mr. Eusden, disappointed of the Laureat's place, wrote the following verses; which were no sooner published but the late Queen sent to a bookseller for them. The author had not at that time a friend either to get him introduced, or his poem presented at Court, yet such was the unspeakable goodness of that Princess, that, notwithstanding this act of ceremony

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“mony was wanting, in a few days after publication Mr. Savage received a Bank-bill of fifty pounds, and a gracious message from her Majesty, by the Lord North and Guilford, to this effect, ‘That her Majesty was highly pleased with the verses, that she took particularly kind his lines there relating to the King, that he had permission to write annually on the same subject, and that he should yearly receive the like present, till something better (which was her Majesty’s intention) could be done for him.’ After this, he was permitted to present one of his annual poems to her Majesty, had the honour of kissing her hand, and met with the most gracious reception.

“Yours, &c.”

Such was the performance \*, and such its reception, a reception, which, though by no means unkind, was yet not in the highest degree generous: to chain down the genius of a writer to an annual panegyric shewed in the Queen

\* This poem, being inserted in the future part of this collection, vol. XLI. p. 215, is here omitted. E.

too much desire of hearing her own praises, and a greater regard to herself than to him on whom her bounty was conferred. It was a kind of avaricious generosity, by which flattery was rather purchased than genius rewarded.

Mrs. Oldfield had formerly given him the same allowance with much more heroic intention: she had no other view than to enable him to prosecute his studies, and to set himself above the want of assistance, and was contented with doing good without stipulating for encomiums.

Mr. Savage, however, was not at liberty to make exceptions, but was ravished with the favours which he had received, and probably yet more with those which he was promised: he considered himself now as a favourite of the Queen, and did not doubt but a few annual poems would establish him in some profitable employment.

He therefore assumed the title of "Volunteer Laureat," not without some reprehensions from Cibber, who informed him, that the title of "Laureat" was a mark of honour conferred by the King, from whom all honour is derived, and which therefore no man has a right to bestow



flow upon himself; and added, that he might, with equal propriety, style himself a Volunteer Lord, or Volunteer Baronet. It cannot be denied that the remark was just; but Savage did not think any title, which was conferred upon Mr. Cibber, so honourable as that the usurpation of it could be imputed to him as an instance of very exorbitant vanity, and therefore continued to write under the same title, and received every year the same reward.

He did not appear to consider these encomiums as tests of his abilities, or as any thing more than annual hints to the Queen of her promise, or acts of ceremony, by the performance of which he was intitled to his pension, and therefore did not labour them with great diligence, or print more than fifty each year, except that for some of the last years he regularly inserted them in "The Gentleman's Magazine," by which they were dispersed over the kingdom.

Of some of them he had himself so low an opinion, that he intended to omit them in the collection of poems, for which he printed proposals, and solicited subscriptions; nor can it seem strange, that, being confined to the same  
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subject, he should be at some times indolent, and at others unsuccessful, that he should sometimes delay a disagreeable task, till it was too late to perform it well; or that he should sometimes repeat the same sentiment on the same occasion, or at others be misled by an attempt after novelty to forced conceptions and far-fetched images.

He wrote indeed with a double intention, which supplied him with some variety; for his business was to praise the Queen for the favours which he had received, and to complain to her of the delay of those which she had promised: in some of his pieces, therefore, gratitude is predominant, and in some discontent; in some he represents himself as happy in her patronage; and in others, as disconsolate to find himself neglected.

Her promise, like other promises made to this unfortunate man, was never performed, though he took sufficient care that it should not be forgotten. The publication of his "Volunteer Laureat" procured him no other reward than a regular remittance of fifty pounds.

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He was not so depressed by his disappointments as to neglect any opportunity that was offered of advancing his interest. When the Princess Anne was married, he wrote a poem \* upon her departure, only, as he declared, "because it was expected from him," and he was not willing to bar his own prospects by any appearance of neglect.

He never mentioned any advantage gained by this poem, or any regard that was paid to it, and therefore it is likely that it was considered at court as an act of duty, to which he was obliged by his dependence, and which it was therefore not necessary to reward by any new favour. or perhaps the Queen really intended his advancement, and therefore thought it superfluous to lavish presents upon a man whom she intended to establish for life.

About this time not only his hopes were in danger of being frustrated, but his pension likewise of being obstructed, by an accidental calumny. The writer of "The Daily Courant," a paper then published under the direction of the ministry, charged him with a

\* Printed in vol. XLI. p. 284.

crime, which, though very great in itself, would have been remarkably invidious in him, and might very justly have incensed the Queen against him. He was accused by name of influencing elections against the court, by appearing at the head of a tory mob, nor did the accuser fail to aggravate his crime, by representing it as the effect of the most atrocious ingratitude and a kind of rebellion against the Queen, who had first preserved him from an infamous death, and afterwards distinguished him by her favour, and supported him by her charity. The charge, as it was open and confident, was likewise by good fortune very particular. The place of the transaction was mentioned, and the whole series of the rioter's conduct related. This exactness made Mr. Savage's vindication easy; for he never had in his life seen the place which was declared to be the scene of his wickedness, nor ever had been present in any town when its representatives were chosen. His answer he therefore made haste to publish, with all the circumstances necessary to make it credible; and very reasonably demanded, that the accusation should be retracted in the same paper, that he might no longer

longer suffer the imputation of sedition and ingratitude. This demand was likewise pressed by him in a private letter to the author of the paper, who either trusting to the protection of those whose defence he had undertaken, or having entertained some personal malice against Mr. Savage, or fearing, lest, by retracting so confident an assertion, he should impair the credit of his paper, refused to give him that satisfaction.

Mr. Savage therefore thought it necessary, to his own vindication, to prosecute him in the King's Bench, but as he did not find any ill effects from the accusation, having sufficiently cleared his innocence, he thought any farther procedure would have the appearance of revenge; and therefore willingly dropped it.

He saw soon afterwards a process commenced in the same court against himself, on an information in which he was accused of writing and publishing an obscene pamphlet.

It was always Mr. Savage's desire to be distinguished; and, when any controversy became popular, he never wanted some reason for engaging in it with great ardour, and appearing at the head of the party which he had chosen.

chosen. As he was never celebrated for his prudence, he had no sooner taken his side, and informed himself of the chief topicks of the dispute, than he took all opportunities of asserting and propagating his principles, without much regard to his own interest, or any other visible design than that of drawing upon himself the attention of mankind.

The dispute between the bishop of London and the chancellor is well known to have been for some time the chief topick of political conversation; and therefore Mr. Savage, in pursuance of his character, endeavoured to become conspicuous among the controvertists with which every coffee-house was filled on that occasion. He was an indefatigable opposer of all the claims of ecclesiastical power, though he did not know on what they were founded, and was therefore no friend to the Bishop of London. But he had another reason for appearing as a warm advocate for Dr. Rundle; for he was the friend of Mr. Foster and Mr. Thomson, who were the friends of Mr. Savage.

Thus remote was his interest in the question, which, however, as he imagined, concerned him so nearly, that it was not sufficient  
to

to harangue and dispute, but necessary likewise to write upon it.

He therefore engaged with great ardour in a new poem, called by him, "The Progress of a Divine;" in which he conducts a profligate priest by all the gradations of wickedness from a poor curacy in the country, to the highest preferments of the church, and describes with that humour which was natural to him, and that knowledge which was extended to all the diversities of human life, his behaviour in every station, and insinuates, that this priest, thus accomplished, found at last a patron in the Bishop of London.

When he was asked by one of his friends, on what pretence he could charge the bishop with such an action? he had no more to say, than that he had only inverted the accusation, and that he thought it reasonable to believe, that he, who obstructed the rise of a good man without reason, would for bad reasons promote the exaltation of a villain.

The clergy were universally provoked by this satire, and Savage, who, as was his constant practice, had set his name to his performance, was censured in "The Weekly  
" Mis-

“ Miscellany +” with severity, which he did not seem inclined to forget.

But

\* A short satire was likewise published in the same paper, in which were the following lines :

“ For cruel murder doomed to hempen death,  
Savage, by royal grace, prolong’d his breath.  
Well might you think he spent his future years  
In prayer, and fasting, and repentant tears.  
—But, O vain hope !—the truly Savage cries,  
“ Priests, and their slavish doctrines, I despise.  
“ Shall I———

“ Who, by free-thinking to free action fir’d,  
“ In midnight brawls a deathless name acqui’d,  
“ Now stoop to learn of ecclesiastic men ?—  
“ —No, arm’d with rhyme, at priests I’ll take my aim.  
“ Though prudence bids me murder but their fame ”

“ Weekly Miscellany.”

An answer was published in “ The Gentleman’s Magazine,” written by an unknown hand, from which the following lines are selected :

“ Transform’d by thoughtless rage, and midnight wine,  
From malice free, and push’d without design ;  
In equal brawl if Savage lung’d a thrust,  
And brought the youth a victim to the dust ;  
So strong the hand of accident appears,  
The royal hand from guilt and vengeance clears.  
Instead of wasting “ all thy future years,  
“ Savage, in prayer and vain repentant tears ;”

Exert



But a return of invective was not thought a sufficient punishment. The Court of King's Bench was therefore moved against him, and he was obliged to return an answer to a charge of obscenity. It was urged, in his defence, that obscenity was criminal when it was intended to promote the practice of vice; but that Mr. Savage had only introduced obscene ideas with the view of exposing them to detestation, and of amending the age, by shewing the deformity of wickedness. This plea was

Exert thy pen to mend a vicious age,  
To curb the priest, and sink his high-church rage;  
To shew what frauds the holy vestments hide,  
The nests of avarice, lust, and pedant pride:  
Then change the scene, let merit brightly shine,  
And round the patriot twist the wreath divine;  
The heavenly guide deliver down to fame;  
In well-tun'd lays transmit a Foster's name,  
Touch every passion with harmonious art,  
Exalt the genius, and correct the heart.  
Thus future times shall royal grace extol:  
Thus polish'd lines thy present fame enrol.

—————But grant—————

—————Maliciously that Savage plung'd the steel,  
And made the youth its shining vengeance feel;  
My soul abhors the act, the man detests,  
But more the bigotry of priestly breasts.

“Gentleman's Magazine, May, 1735.” Dr. J.  
VOL. IV. M aJ.

admitted; and Sir Philip Yorke, who then presided in that court, dismissed the information with encomiums upon the purity and excellence of Mr Savage's writings. The prosecution, however, answered in some measure the purpose of those by whom it was set on foot; for Mr. Savage was so far intimidated by it, that, when the edition of his poem was sold, he did not venture to reprint it, so that it was in a short time forgotten, or forgotten by all but those whom it offended.

It is said, that some endeavours were used to incense the Queen against him, but he found advocates to obviate at least part of their effect; for though he was never advanced, he still continued to receive his pension.

This poem drew more infamy upon him than any incident of his life, and, as his conduct cannot be vindicated, it is proper to secure his memory from reproach, by informing those whom he made his enemies, that he never intended to repeat the provocation; and that, though, whenever he thought he had any reason to complain of the clergy, he used to threaten them with a new edition of

“The

“The Progress of a Divine,” it was his calm and settled resolution to suppress it for ever.

He once intended to have made a better reparation for the folly or injustice with which he might be charged, by writing another poem, called “The Progress of a Free-thinker,” whom he intended to lead through all the stages of vice and folly, to convert him from virtue to wickedness, and from religion to infidelity, by all the modish sophistry used for that purpose; and at last to dismiss him by his own hand into the other world.

That he did not execute this design, is a real loss to mankind, for he was too well acquainted with all the scenes of debauchery to have failed in his representations of them, and too zealous for virtue not to have represented them in such a manner as should expose them either to ridicule or detestation.

But this plan was, like others, formed and laid aside, till the vigour of his imagination was spent, and the effervescence of invention had subsided; but soon gave way to some other design, which pleased by its novelty for a while; and then was neglected like the former.

He was still in his usual exigences, having no certain support but the pension allowed him by the Queen, which, though it might have kept an exact œconomist from want, was very far from being sufficient for Mr. Savage, who had never been accustomed to dismiss any of his appetites without the gratification which they solicited, and whom nothing but want of money withheld from partaking of every pleasure that fell within his view.

His conduct with regard to his pension was very particular. No sooner had he changed the bill, than he vanished from the sight of all his acquaintance, and lay for some time out of the reach of all the enquiries that friendship or curiosity could make after him, at length he appeared again penniless as before, but never informed even those whom he seemed to regard most, where he had been, nor was his retreat ever discovered.

This was his constant practice during the whole time that he received the pension from the Queen: he regularly disappeared and returned. He, indeed, affirmed that he retired to study, and that the money supported him in solitude for many months; but his friends declared,

clared, that the short time in which it was spent sufficiently confuted his own account of his conduct.

His politeness and his wit still raised him friends, who were desirous of setting him at length free from that indigence by which he had been hitherto oppressed; and therefore solicited Sir Robert Walpole in his favour with so much earnestness, that they obtained a promise of the next place that should become vacant, not exceeding two hundred pounds a year. This promise was made with an uncommon declaration, "that it was not the promise of a minister to a petitioner, but of a friend to his friend."

Mr. Savage now concluded himself set at ease for ever, and, as he observes in a poem written on that incident of his life, trusted and was trusted; but soon found that his confidence was ill-grounded, and this friendly promise was not inviolable. He spent a long time in solicitations, and at last despaired and desisted.

He did not indeed deny that he had given the minister some reason to believe that he should not strengthen his own interest by advancing him, for he had taken care to distin-

guish himself in coffee-houses as an advocate for the ministry of the last years of Queen Anne, and was always ready to justify the conduct, and exalt the character of Lord Bolingbroke, whom he mentions with great regard in an Epistle upon Authors, which he wrote about that time ; but was too wise to publish, and of which only some fragments have appeared, inserted by him in the “ Magazine ” after his retirement.

To despair was not, however, the character of Savage ; when one patronage failed, he had recourse to another. The prince was now extremely popular, and had very liberally rewarded the merit of some writers whom Mr. Savage did not think superior to himself, and therefore he resolved to address a poem to him.

For this purpose he made choice of a subject which could regard only persons of the highest rank and greatest affluence, and which was therefore proper for a poem intended to procure the patronage of a prince ; and having retired for some time to Richmond, that he might prosecute his design in full tranquillity, without the temptations of pleasure, or the sollicitations of creditors, by which his meditations were in equal danger of being disconcerted, he produced  
a poem,

a poem, "On Public Spirit, with regard to  
"Public Works."

The plan of this poem is very extensive, and comprises a multitude of topicks, each of which might furnish matter sufficient for a long performance, and of which some have already employed more eminent writers, but as he was perhaps not fully acquainted with the whole extent of his own design, and was writing to obtain a supply of wants too pressing to admit of long or accurate enquiries, he passes negligently over many publick works, which, even in his own opinion, deserved to be more elaborately treated.

But though he may sometimes disappoint his reader by transient touches upon these subjects, which have often been considered, and therefore naturally raise expectations, he must be allowed amply to compensate his omissions, by expatiating, in the conclusion of his work, upon a kind of beneficence not yet celebrated by any eminent poet, though it now appears more susceptible of embellishments, more adapted to exalt the ideas, and affect the passions, than many of those which have hitherto been thought most worthy of the ornaments of verse..

popular writers, for he seems scarcely to endeavour at concealment; and sometimes he picks up fragments in obscure corners. His lines to Fenton,

    Serene, the sting of pain thy thoughts beguile,  
    And make afflictions objects of a smile,

brought to my mind some lines on the death of Queen Mary, written by Barnes, of whom I should not have expected to find an imitator;

    But thou, O Muse, whose sweet nepenthean tongue  
    Can charm the pangs of death with deathless song;  
    Canst *sting* *plagues* with easy *thoughts* *beguile*,  
    *Make* pains and tortures *objects of a smile*.

To detect his imitations were tedious and useless. What he takes he seldom makes worse; and he cannot be justly thought a mean man whom Pope chose for an associate, and whose co-operation was considered by Pope's enemies as so important, that he was attacked by Henley with this ludicrous distich:

    Pope came off clean with Homer; but they say  
    Broome went before, and kindly swept the way,

END OF THE FOURTH VOLUME.